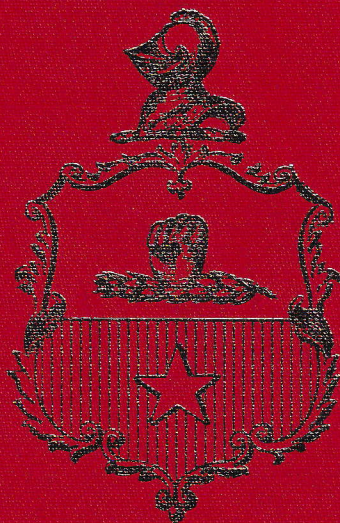


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POINGDESTRE-POINDEXTER
A NORMAN FAMILY

POINGDESTRE-POINDEXTER
A NORMAN FAMILY

THROUGH THE AGES
1250-1977

by
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final chapter by
Robert Downs Poindexter

Published by
Robert Downs Poindexter

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INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the current egalitarian vogue based on the dubious and unproven claims of sociology, the whole fabric of history and human events has been based on the family for the five thousand years of which we have written record and doubtless for thousands more engraved in our ancestral memory.

A prejudice against genealogical research in the minds of many who considered it contrived to glorify individuals at the expense of accuracy is gradually fading as more and more people crave the certainty of origins and roots in this rootless age. All the movements and generalities of human history can be reduced finally to the locality and to the family unit, and, in so doing, can be made far more pertinent and understandable. In fact, the present day disdain for and ignorance of history may be in large measure traceable to the feeling among many that they have no connection with the past. This connection cannot be better established than through the history of one's own family.

As has been observed elsewhere, the descendants of the Poindexters are singularly fortunate in that the name was native to the island of Jersey alone until the Seventeenth Century, at which time only one immigrant came to Virginia. From this source spring all the Poindexters mentioned in this work. They are representatives of a true Norman family that had lived on one of the Norman Isles for at least 600 years.

From the arrival of George Poindexter in Virginia in 1657 a new impetus seems to have arisen, and the family multiplied far more rapidly than it had ever done in Europe and spread eventually throughout the South by the end of the Nineteenth Century.

In this volume no attempt has been made to record all the descendants of the original American ancestor, but rather to chronicle one line deriving directly from him and moving westward with the years into Kentucky and Tennessee and southward into Louisiana and Texas. In this almost classic saga of a Southern family an attempt has been made to construct a biography of the progenitor of each generation, and to add, whenever possible, a brief history of the female line to which he was allied through marriage, since this line of descent is just as real and valid in the female lines as in the "name" line. All of the known offspring of each generation are listed, but with the exception of certain distinguished family members, the collateral descendants are not traced beyond the first generation. The only exception to this rule comes in the ninth American generation, when the

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descendants of Dr. John Reams Poindexter,(1xa) as well as those of his brother, Robert Newton Poindexter(1xb) are traced more fully.

Elaborate, pseudo-scientific systems of enumeration and arrangement have purposely been avoided. Roman numerals placed after the family names indicate the generation. Eleven generations were traced in the European line, and the immigrant, George Poindexter belonged to this eleventh generation. Upon his arrival in Virginia, however, he is henceforth classified as the first American generation, of which eleven generations after him are likewise given. Thus the entire history traces 23 generations from c. 1300 to 1977.

The book is divided into three parts, the first being a history of the family in Europe; the second, the life of Jean Poindestre (1609-1691); and the third, the history of the family in America.

More facts will undoubtedly come to light with the passing years, but it is the hope of the author that this work will at least afford a serviceable framework for future research, as well as a loving memorial to worthy ancestors.

My particular gratitude goes out to several people of this generation, both inside the family and out, who have lent their time, means, knowledge, and effort to this work. Among these, I should like to give specific mention to my beloved parents, John Henry Landers and Myrtie Poindexter Landers,(xa) whose love taught me the beauty of ancestral heritage; to my dear grandfather, Dr. John Reams Poindexter,(1xa) whose reverence for his forebears enkindled in me the desire to write this book; to my cousin, Robert Downs Poindexter,(xb) through whose generosity and kindness this book has been published; to my aunt, Ruby Glenwood Poindexter Lackey,(xa) who contributed information on recent generations; to Mary Ellaline Poingdestre of Teddington, Middlesex, England, who shared family tales and treasures with me; to Mrs. Rita Marsales, who faithfully typed and arranged an often baffling and sometimes illegible manuscript; to Mrs. Philip De Veulle, who introduced me to the wonders of Jersey and made available countless old records; to William V. Mealy and the Rev. Philip Stark, S.J., who encouraged and helped me through the years.

John Poindexter Landers
Houston, Texas
July 16, 1975

POINGDESTRE-POINDEXTER A NORMAN FAMILY

THROUGH THE AGES
1250-1977

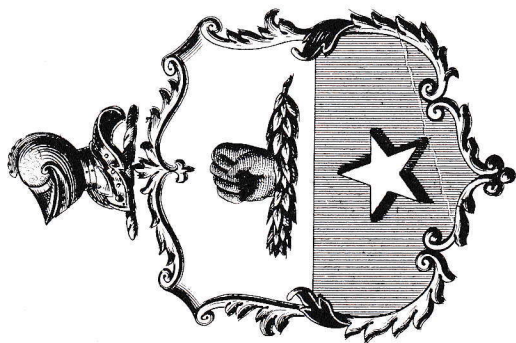
PART ONE
**THE POINGDESTRE FAMILY
IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

THE POINGDESTRE FAMILY IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Except for the DeCarterets and Lemprières, the two leading families of Jersey since very remote times, and several other prominent medieval families now extinct, e.g., De St. Martin, De Barentin, and Bras-de-Fer, the Poingdestre family is among the oldest and most noteworthy on the island. In fact, evidence indicates that the name is actually endemic to Jersey, no traces of its early use existing elsewhere on the mainland of France or England. Various colorful origins are cited for it by chroniclers, perhaps the most interesting of which is the story recounting that Rollo applied the sobriquet to the gallant captain of the right wing of his conquering army in Normandy and that it was thereafter adopted, after the custom of the time, as a surname. Perhaps a more probable, though more prosaic derivation lies in the fact that it was given to its first bearer because of a pronounced physical characteristic. The earliest extant armorial bearing belonging to a member of the family is identical with that still in use by the lineal descendants, lacking, of course, the motto, which was a later addition. The seal which John Poingdestre, bailiff of Jersey, used in signing official documents bears the initials I and P as well as the dexter fist in chief and a mullet in base. The earliest document bearing this seal was written in 1452.

The most ancient contemporary reference to the family by its present surname occurs in the archives of St. Lô in Normandy. Therein Geoffrey and Raoul Poingdestre are mentioned as landowners in Jersey in the year 1250.

The precise relationship between these two men, as well as the exact lineal connection between them and the next bearer of the name to be recorded, one Pierre Poingdestre, is unclear.



DEXTERA FIDEI PIGNUS
POINGDESTRE

From the year 1309 onward, however, research rests on firmer ground. In the Roles d'Assises for the year 1309 we find in the Pleas of the Crown, the following statement:

The Parish of St. Saviour comes by 12 men. The jurors present that: (here follows a long list wherein the following is included) . . . They present also that Robert Sibelle senior is wont maliciously to cause the subjects of the Lord the King to be cited out of the islands, who comes and is convicted by the greater part, etc. Therefore he is committed to prison; and Thomas Hugh, clerk, likewise caused to be cited, etc., and now for five years has maliciously troubled Floria Chapelain; and Peter Poingdestre likewise and he maliciously caused Robert Aleyn and John de Caley to be cited before the Justices delegated; and Richard Poubele likewise maliciously caused Peter le Telier to be cited at Coutances, and at much trouble and at great costs contrary to the general inhibitions, etc., who did not come. And let the Viscount take into the hands of the lord the King the lands and tenements, etc., he was amerced. Afterwards there was brought here a certain letter at the suit of the aforesaid Peter Poingdestre to summon the Bailiff and many others of the island to be before the conservators of the privileges of the University of Paris, etc., to answer for the transgressions here done, etc. And the jurors say that that is done by the abetment and procurement of Joan the sister and partner of the said Peter. Therefore their lands with their chattels shall remain in the hands of the Lord and King until etc., to wit, 3 quarters of barley of the crop of 2 virgates of land value 24 sols, one cow value 25 sols, 12 sheep value 24 sols, sundries in the house value 10 sols, and one acre of land which is worth by the year 6 measures of wheat. Also land in the parish of St. Clement.

Another extract from the same Roles states:

Continuation of the parish of St. Saviour. They present also that the assize of bread and wine is broken by the underwritten, to wit, by Robert le Lorour, Peter du Val, Godfrey le Rous, Perrota Payn, le Prudhomme, Laurence, his brother, Guillot le Rous, Perrota Payn, Margery Payn, Ralph Mourant, Robert Geoffrey, Richard Lengleys, Ralph Brussebarre, Edmund Guyot, William Hubert, Richard le Musson, William Palot, Robert Poleyn, John Esclenke, Richard Estur, William le Seneschal, William Barbey, Peter Poleyn, William Reson, William senior, Peter Mahaud, Colin Guyot, William Pigou, . . . Havel, Raulina Poleyn, bakers; and Galiota la Normande, Robert le Gerentier, Ralph le Fevre, Juliana lelvel, Peter Poingdestre, Colin de la Hougue, Thomas Hugh, Laurence Loisel, Richard le Fevre, John Ahier, Beatrice Mailhu, Guillimota le Roseye, Ralph Ammeline, Duce l'

Anglaise, Thomas Cokerel, Philip Lustagne, Ranulph Gautier, Guil-lot Baron, Philip Payn, Micheel Payn and Dionise the wife of Gray, taverners; and Ralph Barbey, Richard le Loreour, William Cokerel, John la Marselle, Junior, and . . . Hobbedot, bakers and taverners. Therefore all of them to be amerced. On the arrival of the justices in the islands all judicial functionaries and other officers were summoned. They and the jurors of each parish presented crimes and misdemeanors and anything detrimental to the King's rights and revenues.

Thus we may conclude from observation of the aforementioned rolls that even at this early date the Poingdestre family were resident in the parish of St. Clement as well, and in later years a cadet branch of the family was established there. We can gather from the rolls that Peter, or Pierre Poingdestre (b.c. 1280) was a man of property, the owner of a tavern (as well as of agricultural land) and was arraigned before the justices on a charge of false accusation and for some infringement of payment of feudal dues. Unfortunately, we have no record of his positive achievements, since the assize roles were concerned largely with misdemeanors and defaults. Even the DeCarterets and Lemprières were amerced for various misdemeanors in such assizes. No other detailed records remain to us from the period.

At this point there is a temptation to draw some parallel, though on different levels, between the early notices of the Poingdestre family and those of the Medici in Florence. Both had roots in the newly formed middle class, an ever-increasing phenomenon of the 14th Century. Both attained public importance of a local nature during the latter half of the century. And finally, both rose to hold civil office during that period. But whereas the Medici remained always the champions (at least the apparent defenders) of the bourgeoisie and continued to identify their fortunes with those of that class, the Poingdestre family soon entered the ranks of the landed gentry finally to become one of the leading feudal families on the island. Peter Poingdestre was probably the father of John Poingdestre, jurat of 1367, and it is thus that older genealogies of the family list him.

From 1367 onward it becomes possible through public office and inheritance to trace the exact family lineage at least as far

as the eldest male heir of each generation is concerned, for primogeniture was *de rigueur*. Before that date we encounter two members of the family whose place in the genealogy is less certain. One is a certain Johan Poingdestre, clericus, mentioned in 1363. The other is Jourdain Poingdestre, who was prior of St. Michel du Valle in Guernsey from 1325-1331.

Since there is no record to indicate that members of the Poingdestre family were ever resident on the island of Guernsey except for an occasional intermarriage in the female line, and *a fortiori*, because religious were placed *al libitum superioris* and not on account of their place of nativity, it is fairly clear that Jourdain Poingdestre was originally a native of Jersey and a member of the manorial family of that island. He was probably a brother of Peter and an uncle of John Poingdestre, jurat, 1367. The records first mention him in 1325, when he made a return of the value of rents for the priory of St. Michel du Valle in Guernsey for the mother abbey of Mont St. Michel in France. The following is an abstract:

Vallia. Anno vigesimo quinto circa festum Sancti Auberti computavit frater Jordanus Poingdestre de valore prioratus de Vallia et fuit valor octingentis quinquaginta quatuor libris XVIII. solidis de quibus acquitavit se de quingentis et quinquaginta novem libris et octodecim solidis. Item ducentas libras pro victu suo.

In the year 1327 we have a letter written by Jourdain Poingdestre in his function as prior of St. Michel du Valle to Ogier, prior of Otterton in Devon saying that the abbot of Mont St. Michel has ordered Poingdestre to send Ogier certain models to be used in petitioning the king for protection of the goods of the order, since Sire Gerard d'Orons, Guardian of the Isles, has seized goods from the abbey under pretext of a state of war. The language of the letter shows that Poingdestre was a learned man:

Religioso viro et honesto domino Ogero priori de Autritonia suis humilis frater et socius J. Poyngdestre priour de Valle se totum cum salute. Sciatis me a domino abbate michi precepisse et mandasse literas quod vobis mitterem maneriem ac etiam modum breviorum impetrandi pro bonis nostris rehabendis et aliud breve quod sumus in protectione domini Regis, quorum brevium tenor talis qui sequitur talis est sicut per consilium habuimus videlicet: . . .

Inde tantum facientes quod vos et ego non possumus de negligentia redargui. Michi vestro super hiis omnibus et voluntatem vestram quam paratus sum pro viribus adimplere per primum nuntium remandantes. Valeat fraternitas vestra et amicitia per tempora longiora. Portatori presencium si fidelem inveneritis per ipsum voluntatem vestram remandetis.

The superscription on the back of the letter reveals something more of Poingdestre's genteel character in that the monk addressing him reveals his trust and confidence in his handling of the matter.

De nautis non dubitetis propter hoc quod dixi per fidelem quod de ipsis confido, et si mitterent aliquem alienum causa necessitatis nuntium vestrum, voluntatem vestram per nuntium vestrum specialem dictis nautis mittere velitis et eisdem bonum vultum hylaritatis ostendatis.

In 1331 the abbot of Mont St. Michel constituted Jourdain Poingdestre and Guillaume Lefevre judges together with Sire Simon de St. Martin, rector of St. Savour, Guernsey in a case involving litigation between the priory of St. Michel du Valle and the Parish of the same name. The abbot says,

Notum facimus quod cum contentio moveretur seu moveri speraretur inter nos et priorem prioratus nostri de Vallia in insula de Guernerey ex una parte et commune gencium seu parrochiarorum parrochie Sancti Michaelis de Vallia ex altera ratione et occasione decimaum pasneyorum crescencium in parrochia supradicta et super dicta contencione nos aut alium seu alii nomine nostro et pro nobis ex una parte et dictum commune gencium seu parrochiam aut alius seu alii nomine eorumdem et pro ipsis compromissimus in dictum et ordinacionem religiosorum virorum fratrum Guilli Leffeivre et Jord Poingdestre commonachorum nostrorum et in casu discordie viri venerabilis et discreti domni Symonis de Sancto Martino rectoris ecclesie Sancti Salvatoris in insula supradicta dictique fratres Guills et Jord. onus dicti compromissi in se susceperint dicentes quod intencio eorum erat ut super H. cognoscerent et ordinarent bene et fideliter prout possent.

Finally a letter of the Vicomte d'Avranches constitutes the above-mentioned parties legal arbiters.

From the archives of Warwick Castle bearing the date July 11, 1363, we have an act of the Royal Court of Jersey to which is affixed as that of a special witness, the name of John Poing-

destre, a cleric. Whether or not this is the same man who became "Jurat" in 1367 is not clear. The office of jurat was a civil one, not held by priests. Besides this, the John Poingdestre, jurat, of 1367 was a man of family and the direct ancestor of the main branch of the family. Yet it is clear that the John Poingdestre of 1363 was not a priest, for the name immediately preceding his, that of John Valong, is accompanied by the title *discretus vir* and followed by the appositive *presbyter*, thereby indicating him to be a priest, whereas John Poingdestre is merely called *clericus*, i.e., in minor orders. The possession of minor orders did not necessarily bar one from marriage or civil office in the Middle Ages, nor did it imply necessarily eventual promotion to the priesthood. Therefore, the two Johns, 1363 and 1367, may be the same, or the first may have been a relative of the later jurat.

1363 Juillet 11 (Acte fait devant un notaire a la demeure de Jean Brien a Gorey, par Edmond de Chesney, Gardien des Iles, en presence du Bailli et de onze des Jurés, par lequel il est ordonné a la Cour de Congedier Guillaume le Breton et d'élire un autre jure-justicier a sa place, et ce en vertu d'un mandement du Roi Edouard III . . . "Et super his omnibus et singulis petit idem custos per me publicum instrumentum ita ut fuerunt hec sub anno indictione mensi die pontificatu (Urban V, first year) et loco predictis, presentibus ad hoc discreto viro domino Johanne de Valong, presbytero, Johanne Poingdextre, clerico, Johanne Hugone et Petro Episcopo, testibus ad haec vocatis specialiter et rogatis."¹

In 1367 John Poingdestre, (1)² probably the son of Peter Poingdestre, was serving as Juré Justicier, i.e., a Jurat of the Royal Court of the island. His name appears on a *contrat* (deed) bearing that date, and, since the office was held for life, it is possible that he had held the position for some years anterior to that date. The following is an excerpt from the *contrat*:

¹ Bulletin, Archives of Warwick Castle, No. 1153. A similar reference is made to "Phillippus de Carteret, clericus," in the year 1400; *vide* Chartulaire, fasc. I., p. 78.

² From this point to the end of this chapter, the Roman numerals in parentheses after the name of a member of the family will indicate his generation in the genealogy. Thus the above John Poingdestre is the first generation from which we have a continuous record.

Acte de la Cour Royale de Jersey pardevant Richard de St. Martin. Bailli, dans un proces entre Geoffrey Le Hardy, Prieur de St. Clement et Guillot de Lay. Procureur de l'abbé du Mont St. Michael d'une part; et Guillaume Le Breton d'autre (1367) . . . Presens a ce Monsieur Regnaud de Cartret, Richard Le Petit, *Johan Poingdestre*, et Pierre Le Loreur. Donney comme dessus . . . Lettre de ratification de ce desistement pardevant Richard Le Petit, Bailli de Jersey, faite en 1368 en presence de Renaud de Carteret, Raoul Lempriere, Pierre Le Loreur, et *Jean Poingdestre*, Jurés du Roi.

Of possible interest, since such documents are rare, is another *contrat* dating from June 8, 1384 in which Rauline d'Anneville, widow of Jaquet Hascoul, and daughter of Robert d'Anneville, seigneur du Briel, relinquishes all the goods of inheritance of her father and mother situated in Normandy to Jean de St. Martin in exchange for an annual rent of eight quarters of grain payable in Jersey. The stipulation is made that, if the war between the kings of England and France hinders the recipient from entering in possession of the inheritance mentioned, the rent will not have to be paid until after peace is declared. Besides being from a period sparsely represented by documents, the *contrat* is a linguistic curiosity, exhibiting as it does many peculiarities of the Jersey dialect of that period. The final lines of the deed run thus:

Et ne paiera rien le dit Johan des diz wyet quartiers de fourment, de sy a tant que il soyt paez entre les roys, tant avant que le dit Johan ou qui aura cause de luy puyse avoir possecion des diz heritages possiblement. Et nous, avant dit ballif, les dites parties fournir et acomplir les chosses desus dites en la manere comme desus est dit, l'un en vers l'autre, jouste leurs confessions et obligations, condempnes et condempnum. Et tesmoyng de ce, nous avouns seeley ces lettres du seal de nostre ballie, presens a ce Guillaume de Carteret, Perres Brasdefer et Johan Poyngdestre, jurey du roy. Donnees comme desus.

With the sole exception of the Bailiff, the twelve jurats were the highest officials on the island. They performed varied functions, executive and legislative, as well as judicial.

Similarly, John Poingdestre(II) is mentioned as jurat on deeds bearing the dates 1370, 1377, 1379, 1382, 1384, Sept. 5, 1388, and 1389. Judging from the fact that the eldest son held such a position in almost every subsequent generation of the

family for several centuries and that a man was usually of rather mature age when he undertook such a charge, it is obvious that the John Poingdestre⁽¹⁾ of 1367 was the father of the jurat of that name who served in 1382-1389. John Poingdestre⁽¹¹⁾ became Bailiff of Jersey in 1414.

The dramatic changes in the course of western European history are mirrored on a small scale in the annals of the Poingdestre family during the late Fourteenth and early Fifteenth centuries. It was during this period when the family passed from their position as members of the minor gentry to that of great landowners of Jersey.

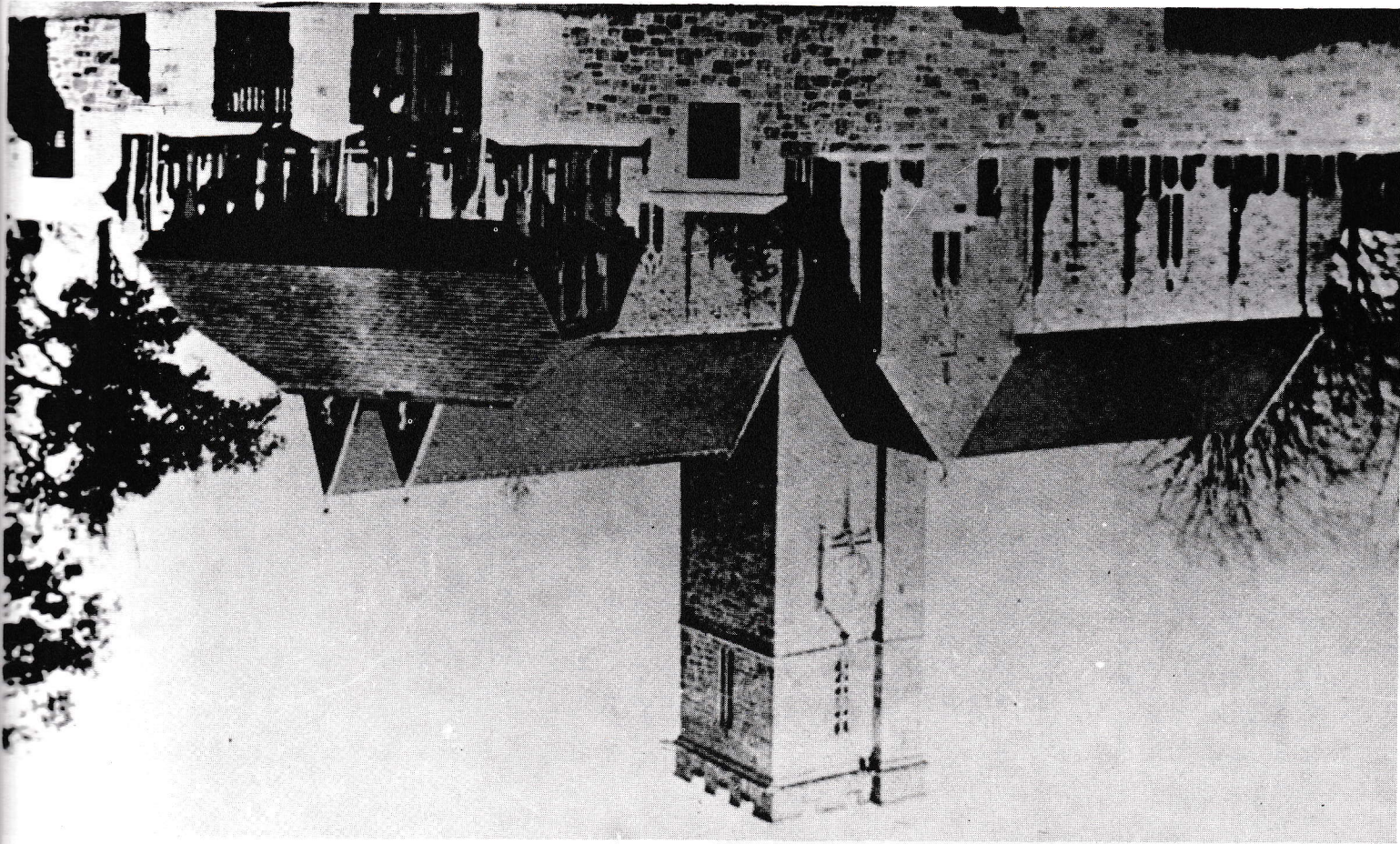
In 1413 Guillemot Payn sold the feudal fief of Dielament to five purchasers. Among them was John Poingdestre,⁽¹¹¹⁾ the young son of the bailiff of 1414. The following is an extract of the transaction as recorded in the records (re-copied in French at a later date) of the Cour d'Heritage in Jersey:

En 1413 . . . Guillemote Payn . . . vendit le fief de Dielament avec ses appartenances, a cinq acquireurs, savoir, Johan Lemprière, Seigneur de Rozel; Regnauld le Lorreur; Clement le Hardy; Perrot le Lorreur; et Johan Poingdestre.

All the names mentioned in the foregoing document are those of representatives of leading island families. A seigneur of one of the principal fiefs was *de facto* a member of the noblesse, after the French custom. The palmy days had begun for the Poingdestres.

An event which placed John Poingdestre among the fifteen leading feudal lords of Jersey was his purchase in 1419 of a fief in the parish of St. John in the north of the island. Hitherto the fief had been known as Mottier; thereafter it has been known to the present day as Fief ès Poingdestre. The seigneur of this fief owns the land directly from the king, or *in capite*, to use the medieval expression, and is called a *franc tenant*. He owes *suite de cour*, i.e., he is bound to appear annually at the Assize d' Heritage either in person or through a procurator. He must answer, when called upon by the Procureur General, "Garde," signifying, "I have kept my appointment." Three consecutive defaults will cause the resumption of the fief by the Crown. There are fourteen other such fiefs on the island. The

CHURCH OF ST. SAVIOUR, JERSEY, PARISH CHURCH OF THE POINGDESTRE FAMILY SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES.



Nouvelle Extent des Commissaires pour les Fieux in 1645-1646 recorded the following information regarding the purchase of the fief by John Poingdestre:

L'an 1645 le 27^e Fevrier—Mr. Philippe Poindestre ayant droit ès heritages de Thomas Poindestre. Il nous apparut d'une lettre en dapte de lan 1419 lejour du Samedi apres la feste St. Gilles comme *Jean Poindestre* acquist de Collette de St. Helier le fieu du Moutier en la paroesse de St. Jean lequel fieu est tenu de notre Sire le Roy en chef et a droit de forfaiture, verp, guerp, essiage et a droit de chasse comme est porte par les droits dou il possede.

At the Cour d'Heritage of 1669 the status of the fief ès Poingdestres, as well as the feudal duties of its seigneur as a *franc Tenant* are expressly stated; the Edouard Poingdestre referred to is the son of Philippe Poingdestre, seigneur until his death in 1665:

Mr. Edouard Poingdestre Sr. du Fief ès Poingdestres à esté a faire sa comparance a la cour comme franc tenant à la cour des chefs plaids d'heritage.

Sire Clement Poyndestre was rector of St. Ouen (d. 1459).

Collette de St. Helier was the widow of Pierre Brasdefer, seigneur des Augrés, and member of an old feudal family now extinct in the male line. There is no evidence that the Poingdestre family or any of its members ever actually lived within the limits of the fief. On the contrary, the family were resident from the earliest times in the parish of St. Saviour (cadet branches later lived at St. Clement and St. Helier) down to the beginning of the present century. By the Fifteenth Century and probably earlier they were living in a house now called Swan Farm on the manor of Grainville of which they were the lords. The old house remains today and is situated behind Grainville manor house, which the Poingdestre family built probably early in the Seventeenth Century. Edward Gibbs Poingdestre sold Grainville Manor in 1875.³ The fief passed out of the family in 1727, but not the land in St. Saviour.

Elevation to a higher rung on the political and social ladder occurred when John Poingdestre(III) was appointed lieutenant-

³ Bulletin, p. 121, 1961, Ahier.

bailiff of Jersey around the period 1420-1425. Thus the head of the family and purchaser of the fief had come to occupy the second highest position on the island. A *contract* mentions him as holding the lieutenant-baillyship in 1425.

From this date to the end of the Fifteenth Century the name of Poingdestre became increasingly prominent in insular affairs until, in 1452 we find the eldest son of the abovementioned lieutenant-bailiff, another John Poingdestre,(IV) occupying the highest position in Jersey, that of bailiff. In 1450 his son, yet another John Poingdestre,(V) was elevated to the dignity of jurat of the Royal Court.

John Poingdestre,(IV) Bailiff of Jersey, was seigneur of the Fief ès Hormans in addition to his other holdings in 1445.⁴ Apparently the fief remained in the Poingdestre family for several generations thereafter. Although mentioned as bailiff in 1453, Poingdestre must have died in that year or shortly afterwards, because he was succeeded in office by Nicholas Morin in 1459. At the time of his death Bailiff Poingdestre was seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres; the Fief ès Hormans; part of the Fief of Dièllement;⁵ the ancestral estate in St. Saviour's parish, and the owner of perhaps other land as well. This large land tenure, together with his high position, placed him among the leaders of the island *noblesse*.

Nicholas Morin continued to be bailiff of Jersey when, in 1461, Pierre de Brézé, Count de Maulevrier, sent an expedition against Jersey and placed the island under French rule for the next seven years. Morin, referred to as "de London," was buried on Dec. 17, 1475 in St. Saviour's Church.

John Poingdestre,(I) son of the bailiff of 1453, who was also the same person as the jurat of 1450, married Helen, daughter of Nicholas Morin. This John Poingdestre,(V) jurat, became connétable, or sheriff and civic head of the parish of St. Saviour, in 1462.

A recent writer of Jersey history of that period has com-

⁴ John Poingdestre(III) married Jeanette, daughter of Regnaud le Lorreur.

⁵ all three of these fiefs are held *in capite* and owe *suite de cour*.

mented on certain aspects of the rule of De Brézé.⁶ The French invasion was coeval with the Wars of the Roses in England, and some authorities see a direct connection between the two, since De Brézé was a cousin of Marguerite of Anjou, consort of Henry VI. In the following passage we find mention of several prominent Jersey citizens including Nicholas Morin and John Poingdestre, son of the bailiff of 1452 and a future bailiff himself. The issue was not a clear cut conflict between England and France, since one of the contending royal factions in England had French interests. Thus the islanders were no doubt divided.

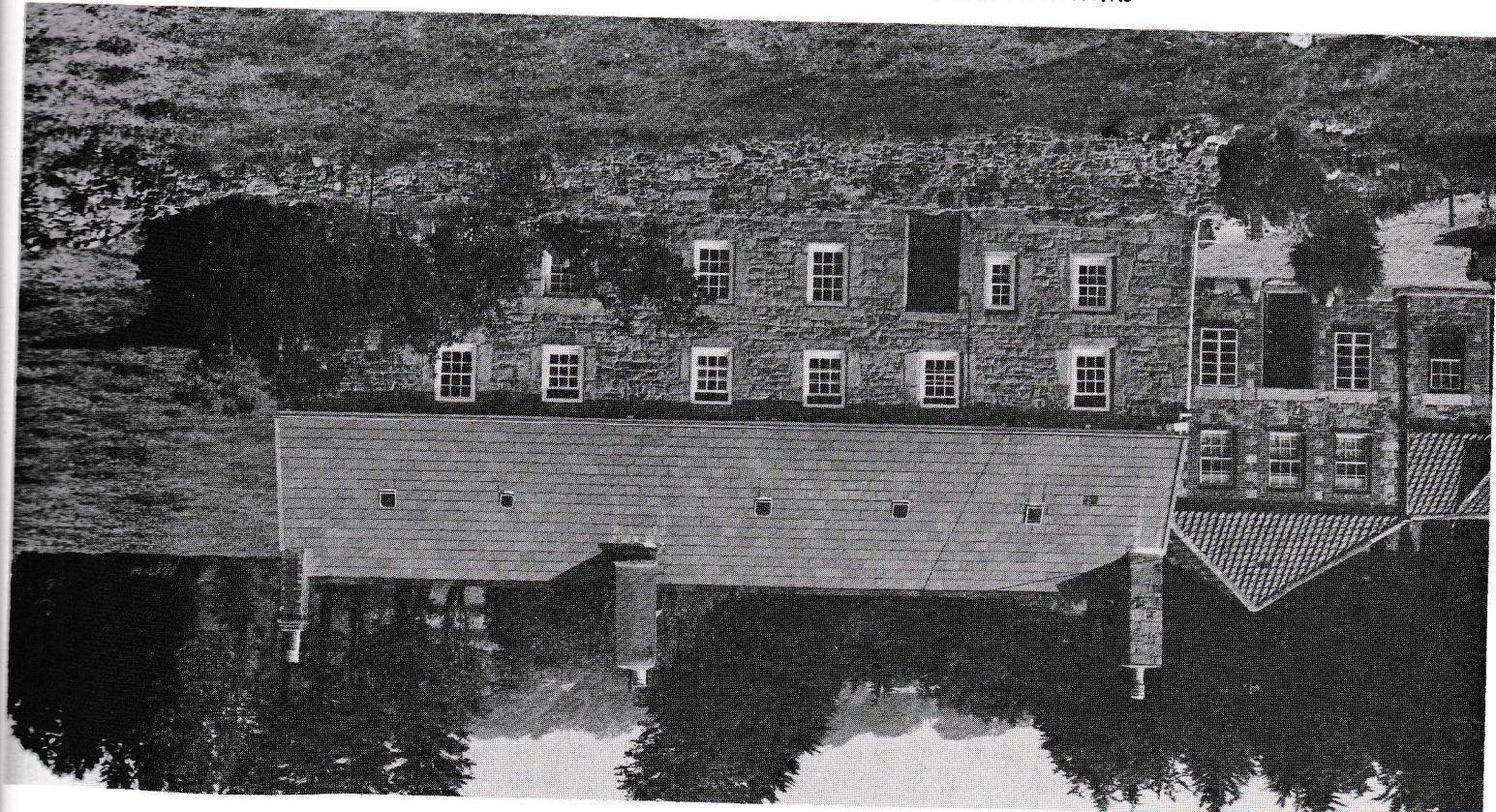
Toward the end of 1463 De Brézé arrived in the Island and called together a meeting of such principal inhabitants as he could induce to attend, and, among others, we find the names of Nicholas Morin, who had been appointed bailiff in 1458, John Poingdestre, John Le Lorreur, Guillaume de la Rocque, the St. Martins and others, and at that meeting regulations were passed which were known as "Les Ordonnances de Maulevrier." Nicholas Morin had been bailiff of Jersey prior to the French invasion. He lived at "Le Muorin" in the parish of St. Saviour's and apparently was not a man of war . . . St. Saviour's was one of the parishes dominated by the French from Mont Orgueil. After De Brézé arrived in the Island, he called a Court of Assize to be held at the Castle on the 2nd of October, 1463, and Morin was as bailiff directed to preside over the Court. All the principal inhabitants were summoned to attend . . . There was one innovation by which jurors in future were to be elected by the bailiff, jurats, curés, and constables, thereby depriving the people of the right to elect their own representatives.

The student of the history of the parish of St. Saviour—or of that of the entire island, for that matter—is quite fortunate in that, during the period between 1450 and 1500 much valuable information relevant to Jersey is contained in the dairy of the rector of St. Saviour, Sire John Hue. Few parishes have such thorough documentation at this early period.

For instance, a passage from his diary records the abovementioned constablenesship of John Poingdestre, as well as his relationship to the bailiff, his father, which, due to the repetition of the name John in the eldest son of almost every generation, can grow very confusing:

⁶ A. C. Saunders, *Jersey in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*.

SWAN FARM, THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE POINGDESTRE FAMILY, BUILT C. 1490 OR PERHAPS EARLIER ON LAND WHERE THE FAMILY HAD LIVED SINCE THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.



Memorandum que in l'An MCCCCLXII John Poingdestre junior filz de John Poingdestre Bailiff estoit Conestable de la Paroisse de St. Sauveur.

In 1467 John Poingdestre,⁽¹⁾ husband of Hélène Morin, jurat of Jersey and *connétable* of the parish, became the third member of his family to be appointed Bailiff of Jersey, a position which he held until his death in 1477. An entry in the diary of Sire John Hue records the burial in that year, first of Hélène Morin Poingdestre (January 15), and later (July 7) of Bailiff Poingdestre himself.

A° MCCCCLXXVII: Helena Uxor J: Poingdestre filia Nicolai Morin inhumata in Ecclia prope ditum Nicolaum in capella dedit iiii; cāb frūti ex hereditagiis suis propter celebrānd unam Missam quolibet an.º in die inhumationis sue duobus capellanis unum propter orandum pro ipsa unū: pro dita inhumatione in dita capella.

A:º MCCCCLXXVII: John Poingdestre inhumat: in Ecclia dedit Sept:º Mensis Julii Thesaur: Sti Salvatoris duos cāb frūti item obit quingz cab.

We are doubly fortunate in having such entries since practically all the roles, records, and registers of the island were burned in a fire in the home of Thomas Lemprière, the bailiff in 1502.

Several facts can be adduced from the foregoing records. First, only the leading personages of the island gentry were ever buried inside the church. In fact, the prerogative was denied to everyone in 1577 by a special edict. Secondly, we can gather that, from the stipulation prescribing two chaplains for the memorial service as well as that setting aside a generous annual bequest for the purpose, a condition of affluence was implicit.

The next generation of the Poingdestres is likewise mentioned in Hue's diary, for on January 15, 1477 Alinor, wife of John Poingdestre,^(vi) son of the bailiff who died that same year, gave, together with her mother, donations to the curate of St. Saviour's church for the celebration of a Mass and prayers for herself, probably for a safe childbirth:

A°MCCCCLXXVII: Alinor, feme de John Poingdestre donna son obit 1

XV Januar: cab: de fromt au cure pour celebrer une Messe et ung autre cab a jī pbrs po' elle, dona 1 cab de fromt et sa mere ung autre cab: a maintenant le Cierge devant nre Dame de Pfy.

Thus, by the time of the death of his father the bailiff, John Poingdestre,^(vi) husband of Alinor (whose family name is yet unknown), had apparently attained maturity, for he was soon to be mentioned in the island records as lieutenant bailiff, first in 1484, later in 1492, and finally in 1500 as jurat (the position of lieutenant bailiff was not necessarily held for life). In a lawsuit of July 9, 1500 concerning the school at St. Saviour between Sire John Hue and Laurens Falle we read the following terminating formula:

... Presens a ce Raullin Lemprière, John du Maresc, Guillaume de Hamptonne, Guillaume Messervy, John Poingdestre, Clement Messervy, et Pierre de Soulement, jurés du Roy.

The Mass and prayers requested by John^(vi) and Alinor Poingdestre on January 15, 1477, were probably preparatory to the birth of one of their children, perhaps their first, because such formal institutions of prayers were generally reserved for births and deaths. Since the older generation had just passed off the scene, it is more than likely that the one yet to come was thus ushered in. For the first time in many generations, we find that the next seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres, the son of Lieutenant-bailiff John Poingdestre and Alinor, does not bear the name John. The new seigneur, whose name comes into prominence after 1500, is George Poingdestre. The reason for the apparently revolutionary change in nomenclature is not so spectacular. There was the usual eldest son named John, but on this occasion he entered the priesthood, thereby leaving the seigneurie open to his younger brother George^(vii). In the *registres* of the diocese of Coutances in Normandy, which had jurisdiction over ecclesiastical matters of the Channel Islands at that

⁷ John Poingdestre was mentioned in the *Extrait du Rental des Fiefs* October 5, 1499, as "gentilhomme et homme loyal et fidel."

time, we find the following entry on the 12 September, 1500:

Sepr.

Die xij^a concessa fuerunt lre dimissorie ad ordinem pbratus
mensis Johaⁿi Poindestre pro^o S^{cti} Salvatoris de Gerseyo.
pred^o

Thus John Poingdestre, (vii) thereafter known on the island as Sire John, the title given to all priests, was ordained to the priesthood in 1500. Frequent mention is made of him in subsequent Jersey records, particularly with regard to inheritance. He was for a time a chaplain in the parish of St. Saviour, but there is no record of his having been rector.⁸ The Roman Catholic records on the eve of the Reformation are scant.

Another son of the Lieutenant Bailiff John Poingdestre (vi) to enter holy orders was Thomas Poingdestre, who was ordained to the diaconate by the Bishop of Coutances on April 5, 1519. The best education that the locality and the times afforded was to be found in clerical pursuits. Both of these men doubtless studied at Coutances, perhaps even at Paris.

5 April Ead' die concessa fuer' dimissor' ad ordinē diaconatus . . .
1519 Pro silib' ad eūd Thome Poindextre S^{cti} Salvator' in ead' (de Gerseyo).

An effect of the Renaissance comes to light for the first time in the foregoing record: the Latinization of the name Poingdestre into "Poindextre," or sometimes later, "Poindexter." Most men who made any pretense to scholarly attainments at the time Latinized their names, e.g., Jacques Le Feuvre d'Étaples became "Faber Stapulensis." This spelling persevered in English and American records, and the Oxonian scholar and Jersey statesman of the Seventeenth Century, John Poindexter, usually employed it for public purposes, at least outside Jersey. Two references to Sire John Poingdestre's later career follow hereafter:

20 Mars 1526: Sanctus Salvator, Dominus Johannes Poingdestre acquiescent.

Sept. 1544. Katherine Surée femme de John Peronet doit prover vers le viconte partie pour les defaultes de Jehan Cheva-

⁸ He was probably a chaplain of one of the chapels of the time.

lier qu'elle est parente et lignagiere au mesme degrey que Sire John Poingdestre estoit a cause de sa mere et eu semblable estat dudit Poingdestre auquel is est condamne et obligie au proces precedent.

From the last entry in the Cour d'Heritage, it is evident that Sire John Poingdestre (vii) was dead by 1544. Four other members of the family are mentioned as having taken holy orders at Coutances between 1500 and 1519, but, being from other parishes, they were only distant or collateral relatives and not of the manorial line.

John Poingdestre, (vi) the jurat and lieutenant bailiff, was dead by June of 1506 when his son George Poingdestre (vii), now seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres, appeared in the Cour d'Heritage with his wife's uncle, Sire Thomas Ahier, and others as attorneys for the estate of John Poingdestre (vi) in a case against Nicholas de Hamptonne. Here is an excerpt of the case:

Cour d'Heritage, Juin 1506: Dominus Thomas Ahier, Georgius Poingdestre, et Johannes Dernez, attornés de John Poingdestre causa foriburse versus Nicholaum de Hamptone tutorem.

Although we do not know the exact date, George Poingdestre (vii) married Girette Ahier, niece of Sire Thomas Ahier, a priest of St. Saviour's parish. The couple lived their whole life on the ancestral estate in that parish. Their generation was to be the last before the great cataclysm of the Reformation came to sweep away many vestiges of the old ways before it. Born about 1480, and apparently next in seniority after his brother, Sire John Poingdestre abovementioned, George Poingdestre lived a quiet life and is mentioned much less than either his forebears or his descendants. In addition to the St. Saviour estate and the Fief ès Poingdestres, George was apparently a part owner of the fief of St. Germain, for in 1528 we find the following entry in the records of the Cour d'Heritage.

1528: George Poindextre—Mony due by reason of the senyory of Saint Garmyn paible at the fest of St. Mychell tharcangell by diverse and sondry persons that is to say.

Girette Ahier Poingdestre died in 1542 and was listed in the *enterrés* (burials) of St. Saviour's parish on "le jour de St. Ber-

nabé, Dec. 21, 1542." George Poingdestre(vii) was buried on Nov. 11, 1544. Thus ended the last truly medieval generation of this Jersey family.

George Poingdestre(vii) left two sons of whom we have record. His eldest son was John Poingdestre,(viii) born about 1504, who succeeded his father in 1544 as seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres as well as of the other landed holdings; the other known son was Thomas Poingdestre, born about 1506, who in 1546 was connetable of the parish of St. Saviour. Thomas Poingdestre married Catherine, daughter of Thomas Lemprière, seigneur of St. Jean la Hougue Boete and bailiff of Jersey, 1502. Catherine Lemprière was the widow of Richard Langlois and of Clement Messervy, by whom she had issue: Clement Messervy and Margaret Messervy, who later married Edouard Poingdestre, son of the abovementioned John Poingdestre.

John Poingdestre(viii) (1504-1583) married Mary de Hamptonne, daughter of Hostes de Hamptonne of the parish of St. Laurens.⁹ This marriage, too, was quite advantageous, since the bride as a co-heiress of her father's estate, brought considerable property with her. John Poindestre rose to considerable prominence on the island. On January 16, 1526, he was serving as an alternate jurat of the Royal Court.

16 Janvier 1527: Placita capitalia hereditagii tenta anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo XXVI, die mercurii post festum beati Mauri abbatis, coram iudicibus, presentibus Johanne Dumarescq, Petro de Carteret, Johanne Payn, Helerio de la Roque, Clemente Messervy, Ricardo Mallet, Nicollao Journeaux, Juratis, Clemente Lemprière, Johannes le Feuvre, Philippus Rommeril, et Johannes Poingdestre, Quislibet in defectu.

In 1532 the Cour d'Heritage mentioned John Poingdestre (viii) as the son of George Poingdestre: (vii)

Sanctus Salvator: Johannes Poingdestre, filius Georgii in defectu versus Thomam Beauby causa uxoris ad afferendum integrum. Recordatum est Dec. 1532.

⁹ The Hamptonne family were the leading family in the parish of St. Laurens. Their house, built early in the Sixteenth Century, still stands; they also paid for the construction of the Hamptonne Chapel in the parish church in 1524.

From 1572 to 1580 John Poingdestre "fils George" was connetable of the parish of St. Saviour and "Procureur du Tresor et Fabrique de ladite paroisse," i.e., treasurer.

Upon the division of the estate of Hostes de Hamptonne in 1569, John Poingdestre(viii) is mentioned as one of the heirs by right of his wife:

Her. 1569: John Poingdestre fils George causa Uxoris, et Clement Poingdestre, part. her. de Hostes Hamptonne.

The eldest surviving son of John Poingdestre(viii) and Mary de Hamptonne was Edouard Poingdestre(ix). Although no record of the date of his birth has been discovered, he was probably born about 1538-39. There were no doubt brothers older than he who died while still young. He had one surviving brother, John Poingdestre(ix), and a sister, Marguerite. In the Cour d'Heritage for 1586 mention is made of "Edward, filz Jean Poingdestre."

On 17 January, 1562 Edouard Poingdestre married Marguerite Messervy, daughter of Clement Messervy, jurat of the Royal Court, and his wife Catherine Lemprière, daughter of Thomas Lemprière, Bailiff of Jersey. On the death of John Poingdestre(viii) in 1583, Edouard Poingdestre(ix) became seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres. Soon thereafter he was appointed *connetable* of the parish of St. Saviour and was mentioned as such in the records from 1586-1587, and a second time from 1597 to 1611.¹⁰ He was also *diacre* (deacon) of the parish. The last mentioned office was an institution of the prevalent Calvinism whereby the incumbent was empowered to take up the offering of the parish and distribute it among the poor at his own discretion and with the advice of the consistory. Thus the Reformation was a *fait accompli* in Jersey, and apparently the Poingdestre family were its staunch adherents, because they were as active in parish affairs as they had been under the old religion. Members of the family, including Thomas Poingdestre, were supposed to have crossed over to France in order to attend Protestant services during the reign of Queen Mary. An entry in the Cour Ecclesiastique de Jersey during the reign of Mary

¹⁰ Commentaires.

seems to bear such a tradition out, because, among others, John Poingdestre(viii) was censured for not having attended religious instruction in 1556:

La cour de l'office fut tenue a St. Sauveur le 8e jour du mois de Fevrier, l'an du Seigneur 1556. Thomas Falle, Jean Poingdestre, Nicollas Ahier, avaient été avertis au prone (religious instruction) deux Dimanches, avec Thomas Lemprière, connetable, Edouard Messervy, et Edmond Falle, qui prenaient la place de son père Jean Falle, de comparaître personnellement devant nous dans ladite Eglise le huitieme jour du m. de Fev. pour informer la justice touchant certains articles qui leur avaient été enoncés et déclarés audit prone par le curé de ladite paroisse.

After refusing to appear, they were declared guilty and instructed to plead before the court of St. Helier later.

The eldest and only son of Edouard Poingdestre(ix) and Marguerite Messervy was Thomas Poingdestre,(x) who, upon the death of his father in 1622, became seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres. Thomas Poingdestre(x) was baptized in the church of St. Saviour on August 11, 1581 and presented by Hugh Lemprière, Jurat, R.C., his godfather. Edouard Poingdestre,(ix) however, contracted a second marriage with Pauline, daughter of Guyon Ahier, and had issue therefrom; this cadet branch will be discussed later.

Thomas Poingdestre(x) married Elizabeth Effard, daughter of the Rev. Nicolas Effard and Sara de Chaumont, on Dec. 14, 1614 at St. Saviour's Church. At this point a few words with regard to the Effard family are appropriate, since they were prominent in Jersey and representative of the period. The Rev. Nicolas Effard, son of John Effard, jurat, R.C., of the island of Guernsey, and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Edmund Perrin, seigneur of Rozel manor, Jersey and jurat R.C., was educated at the newly founded Elizabeth College in Guernsey, for we find in the registers of the Huguenot Waloon Church at Southampton the following entry for 6 April 1572:

Nicolas Effard et Nich. Careye, tous deux escolliers a Mestre Adrien Saravia, recut la Cene a l'Eglise de Southampton.¹¹

¹¹ W. W. Carey, *History of the Careys of Guernsey*.

Thus Nicholas Effard was a disciple of one of the translators of the Authorized Version of the Bible. He was installed as the rector of St. Saviour's church on March 25, 1587. He had probably studied at Oxford as well, because in 1605 "M. Phil. Maret fut mis a l'amende pour avoir dit a Mr. Nics Effard qu'il devoit quelques en Oxford." Effard married first Marie, daughter of the Rev. Nicholas le Duc, rector of St. Jean in Jersey. On July 21, 1587, he married Sara, daughter of the Rev. Pierre de Caumont, rector of St. Peter in Jersey. De Caumont had formerly been rector of Sainte Marie du Mont in Normandy, but fled to Jersey with other refugees of St. Bartholomew's Day in Sept. 1568.¹² Nicholas Effard had ten children by Sara de Chaumont. His daughter Elizabeth, who later married Thomas Poingdestre,(x) was baptized at St. Saviour's church on Dec. 12, 1597. As a matter of added interest, Nicholas Effard, Jr., is mentioned as having returned from Turkey on June 27, 1639 after having been employed by the states to redeem captives and deliver his brother, Peter Effard from slavery.

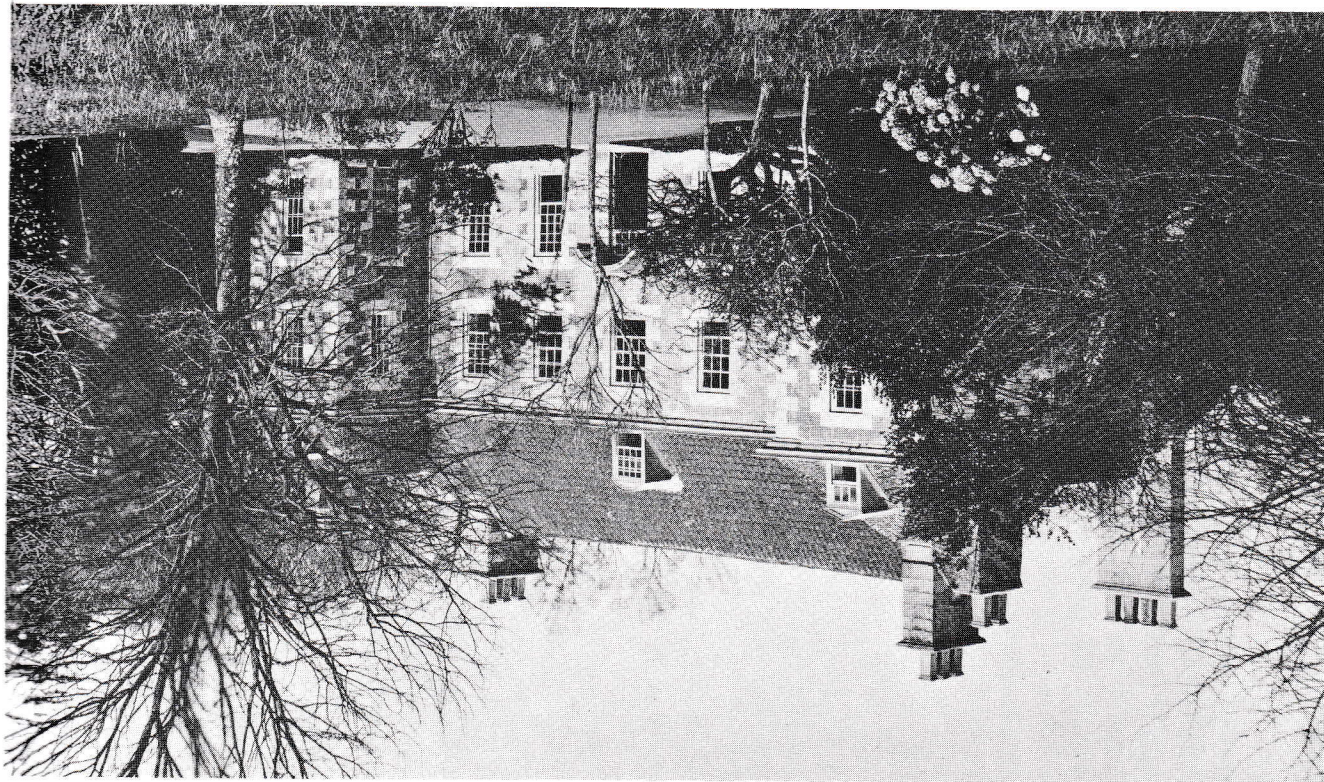
The Rev. Nicholas Effard died on Friday April 27, 1638 and was buried in the cemetery of St. Saviour on the following Sunday.

Returning to Thomas Poingdestre,(x) we find that he and Elizabeth Effard had the following children: Philip Poingdestre,(xi) baptized on February 11, 1621; Jacob Poingdestre (xi), baptized on May 2, 1624; Rachel Poingdestre(xi), and George Poingdestre,(xi) baptized on December 23, 1927. The following entry in the baptismal book records the last event:

George filz Thomas Poingdestre filz Edouard Poingdestre le 23 Decembre 1627 présenté par Thomas filz Thomas Poingdestre et Marie Effard.

It was this George Poingestre (xi) who in 1657 during the Cromwellian revolt immigrated to Virginia with his cousin Peter Effard and his uncle John Poindexter, Esq.:(x) a full biographical sketch will be included later describing this George Poindexter, founder of the American branch of the family.

¹² Pierre de Caumont was a member of the noble Huguenot family of that name of Chateau de Caumont in the Dordogne.



GRAINVILLE MANOR, THE HOUSE BUILT BY THE POINDESTRES ABOUT 1700
NEAR SWAN FARM: IT REMAINED IN THE FAMILY UNTIL 1875.

Philip Poingdestre (x1) later became seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestres upon his father's death. In the *Alumni Oronienses* he is listed thus:

Poindexter, Philip, son of Thomas of Jersey. Hants. pleb., Jesus College; matric. 15 June. 1638, aged 16. B.A., 11 November 1641.

Other members of the family inscribed in the register of that era include the following:

Poindexter, John, M.A.; fellow Exeter College. 1635, until expelled in 1648; lieutenant Bailly of Jersey; possibly B.A. from Pembroke College, Cambridge, 1629-30; M.A. 1633; died 1691, aged 83.

Poingdestre, John, son of Charles Poingdestre of St. Saviour, Isle of Jersey, arm.; Pembroke College, matric. 4 July, 1713, aged 20.

Poingdestre, Thomas; created B.D. from Exeter College, 31 Aug. 1636.

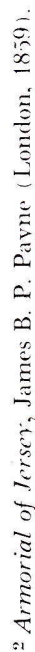
Thus we end this brief study of the Poingdestre family prior to the immigration to America of George Poingdestre (x1) in 1657. Before taking up the history of the family in America, however, the life of John Poingdestre, M. A., the most prominent member of the family in Europe, will be presented in full. Since this biography was originally intended as a separate book, there will be some repetition of the previous material. But the information included therein will emphasize the man's life and background and his eminence as a classical scholar.

A brief history of the Lemprière family will also be included hereafter, since the American Poindexters are directly descended from that family, one of the two most prominent families of Jersey.

THE LEMPRIERE FAMILY

One of the two leading families in Jersey, the Lemprière family, had its origin in the Cotentin (Normandy) where they possessed the Fief de l'Emperière at Crosville. Various writers on the subject dispute the exact date of their arrival in Jersey. G. R. Balleine¹ maintains that the founder of the Jersey branch was

¹ *Biographical Dictionary of Jersey*, by G. R. Balleine (London, 1957), p. 408.

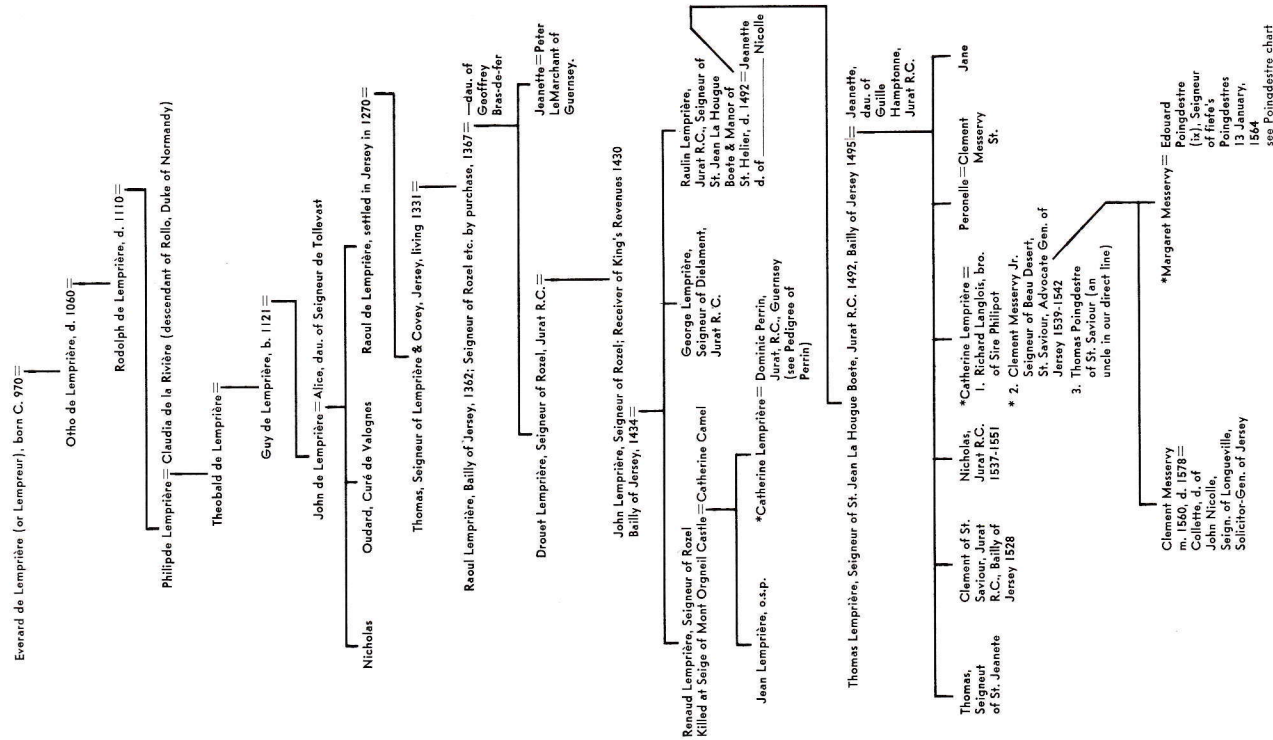


Their daughter, Catherine Lempriere, (viii) married as her second husband, Clement Messervy, (ii) son of Clement Messervy, (i) Jurat, 1498-1503, and Seigneur of Beau Désert. Clement Messervy (ii) was Seneschal of the fiefs of the King and Advocate-General of Jersey 1539-1542.

The daughter of Clement Messervy (ii) and Catherine Lempriere (viii) was Marguerite Messervy, born 1540. In 1562 she married Edouard Poingdestre, (ix) Seigneur of the Fief à Poingdestres and Connetable of St. Sauveur, 1586-7. (See history of family). Thus the Poingdestre family were descended from the other branch of the Lempriere family.

Mention was made earlier of Renaud Lempriere, (vi) the son of Jean Lempriere (v) and Jehanette Le Lorreux. Due to the recorded proceedings of a trial in which he was involved, we have many vivid details of life at Rozel Manor in the Fifteenth Century which would otherwise have been unknown. In 1463 Renaud Lempriere was arrested for plotting to expel the French, who, under Pierre de Brézé, Count of Maulevrier, had occupied Jersey for several years. It is stated therein that Raulin Lempriere was born about 1418. He had a bastard son, Jehan, who was said to play tennis at the manor and "drink with the men." Renaud's wife was Katharine, daughter of John Camel of Shapwick near Blandford in Dorset, and their two, "beautiful children" were Jean Lempriere (vii) and Catherine Lempriere. (vii). Renaud was said to be a keen fisherman and chess-player. He had beautiful gardens and a tennis court in his barn. Mass was said every day in the ancient manorial chapel, and he and his wife attended Mass and Vespers on Sundays at St. Martin's church. The records of the trial also mention festive dinners at the Castle with the Lady of St. Ouen, etc. Renaud Lempriere was acquitted, but later died in the siege of the Castle in 1467. His son Jean Lempriere (vii) succeeded him as seigneur, but died childless. Then his daughter, Catherine Lempriere, (vii) became Lady of Rozel. She married Dominic Perrin of Guernsey, and the manor thus passed for a time to the Perrin family. It was through the Perrin family also that the Effards traced their descent from Raulin Lempriere.

PEDIGREE OF LEMPRIERE OF ROZEL



* = Direct Poingdestre line.

One of the most ancient families in Jersey was that of De Saumarez (or Latin Salsomara or de Salinellis). Raoul de Salsomara (or De St. Hilaire) was granted the manor of Saumarez in the parish of St. Clements by King William Rufus in 1096. A descendant of his, Nicholas De Saumarez (1205-1260), married the heiress of the ancient family of De Lucy (or De Barneville)¹ in the island of Guernsey, who were descended from Geoffrey de Lucy, Keeper of the Isles. Thereupon the De Saumarez family became established in Guernsey and became the leading feudal family there. A daughter of Nicholas de Saumarez (1320-1390) and his wife, Avise de St. Martin, married Michel Le Feyvre, Seigneur of Vinchelez in Jersey. Their son, Michel Le Feyvre, Jurat R. C. 1430, had a daughter, Peronelle, who married Nicolas Morin, Bailiff of Jersey, 1460. Their daughter, Helène Morin, married John Poingdestre, (v) Bailiff of Jersey, 1467. Thus the Poingdestres are descended from the family of De Saumarez of Jersey and Guernsey. (See charts for a complete lineage.)

¹ At this early period, surnames were often interchangeable (when they existed at all) and were taken from the fiefs and manors belonging to the family in the case of the aristocracy.

DE SAUMAREZ

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PART TWO

THE LIFE OF JEAN POINGDESTRE (1609-1691)

PREFACE

The lives and attainments of classical scholars have in some cases been the subject of intensive research and scholarship almost as long as the theories and discoveries which raised these same scholars to a position of eminence. The volume, depth, and accuracy of their research have afforded the grist for many an academic mill. Justly have they been held up as standard-bearers and pace-setters of their times, particularly from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century, when a place in the public trust was still accorded the humanist and classicist. Poggio, Erasmus, Bently, Lachmann, and all their peers are universally esteemed as integral parts of their time and place. But what about the lesser lights in this field? What about the numerous public figures from 1350 to 1900 who made some very real contribution to classical scholarship or at least towards increasing the world's love and understanding of the Greco-Roman past, but who did so only incidentally, as it were. For during this long period and even previous to it, the classical world was a basic fact in the life of any cultured European. Because of their intimacy (at least in affection, if not always in detailed knowledge) with this part of their common heritage, countless statesmen, merchants, nobles, clerics, and even soldiers focused their attention to a greater or lesser extent upon some phase of the ancient world with the result that they frequently succeeded in gleaning new significance from ancient texts already known or even in discovering a manuscript long buried from sight, thereby placing something new from the old authors at the disposal of their contemporaries. Perhaps such a contribution would be only a minor one in our eyes; perhaps on the other hand, it might have wider scope and appear in the form of an entire edition of a hitherto neglected minor author

or a treatise on history of some out-of-the-way place with an emphasis on ancient and medieval primary sources rather than on hearsay and tradition alone, as would commonly have been the case in minor writers of the period.

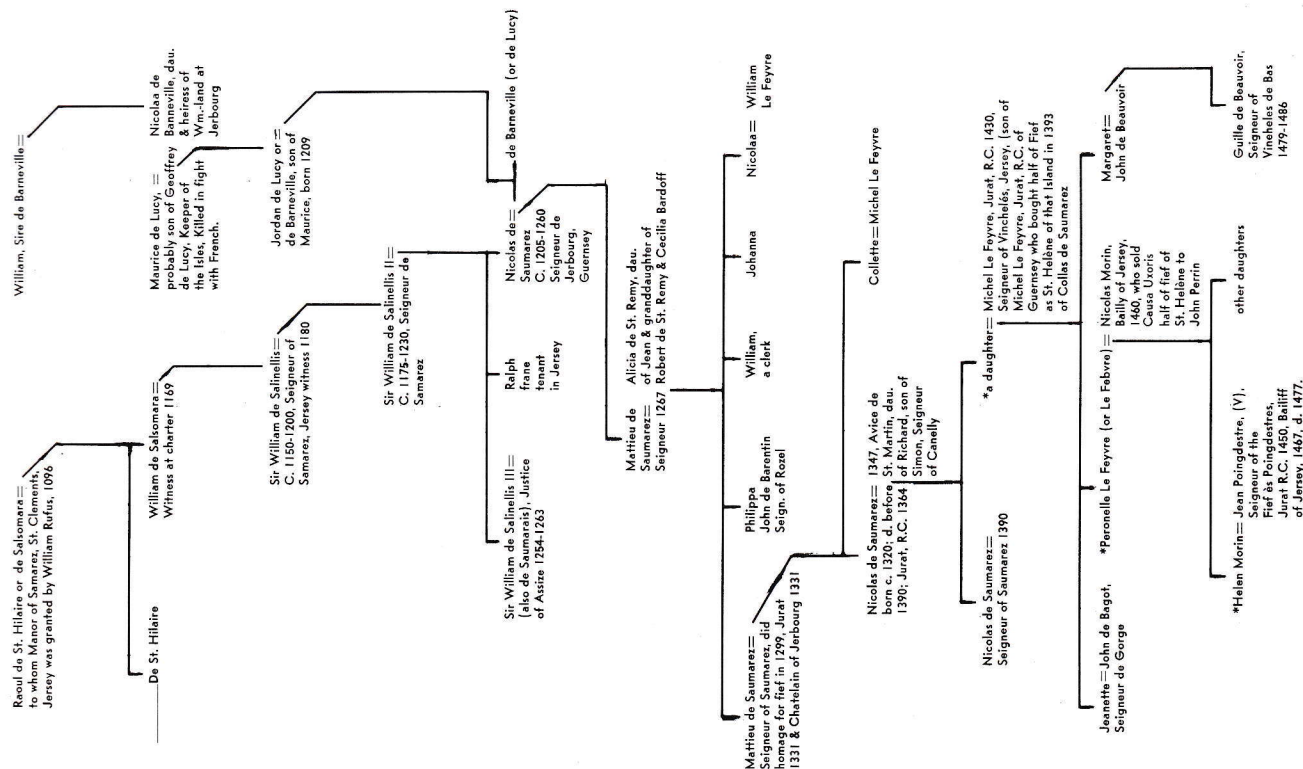
Regardless of the size and impressiveness of their contributions to classical scholarship, such men as these were often not professional scholars, or at least they did not devote the greater part of their life to such pursuits. As cited above, they were often men of affairs who merely gave their leisure time to humanistic studies, and they regarded their sometimes meager, sometimes notable achievements simply as one of the many desirable and even necessary functions of the *uomo universale* which all of them aspired to become.

And, without undue prejudice stemming from the tenor of the thesis here to be treated, is it not possible that men such as these were men more truly moulded in the ancient stamp and patterned after the classical ideal than those monumental, but admittedly one-sided scholars who burned with a zeal and enthusiasm for one end in life that would have been held suspect by most of the very Greeks and Romans whose works they so painstakingly dissected and annotated? For the very earnestness and single-mindedness which have given us such great knowledge and understanding of the ancients are akin more to the Hebraic and Christian ideals than to the broad often easy-going urbanity of Greece and Rome.

Heaven forbid that this present study should propound any heretical notions regarding intellectual lights of our humanistic past or that it should cast any aspersions on their indispensable contributions. *Receperunt mercedem suam.*

The aim of this dissertation is to extol the *vir liberalis* of our immediate European past, and, through the medium of a specific example to embody a whole genus: the minor, or *casual* classical scholar. Such men have often not gone down without their meed of honor, but the name that they left behind them was frequently due more to achievements of a worldly and material nature than to their scholarly attainments. We can say nothing of those whose other attainments were not sufficient to gain them lasting remembrance.

DE SAUMAREZ, LE FEBVRE, AND MORIN



Fortunately in the case at hand, his worldly achievements did secure him a permanent, if minor place in the esteem of posterity, for Jean Poingdestre (John Poindexter) enjoys the rare distinction of being a "big fish in a little pond" in Jersey with only "footnote status" in the annals of contemporary British history as a whole. Unfortunately his biographers in the past have given only passing notice to his classical scholarship with some laconic observation or other to the effect that he "was esteemed one of the soundest Grecians of his day,"¹ or that he was an "elegant adept" in the penmanship of that language.² It is equally sad that all too little of his work in this field remains for us to peruse, but such was the case with most of the men of his ilk, for they were too busy with worldly affairs to publish. Nevertheless enough remains to place him without fear of contradiction in a well-earned niche as a minor classical scholar of the Seventeenth Century.

Since it is the gist of this thesis that these minor scholars more fully embodied the ancients whom they admired than did their more thorough and, admittedly (in this respect) more valuable contemporaries of an exclusively classical bent, all aspects of Poindexter's life will be treated here in all the detail which extant records permit, for it is not only with a view to extolling his scholarly contributions that this paper is written, but perhaps even to a greater extent is it compiled to illuminate the valuable place which these minor humanists have held in our western society and the very real part which they have played in moulding our culture in all its aspects. Their greatest contributions are not to the *letter* of classical scholarship, but to the spirit of Greece and Rome which their type, more than any other sort of individual embodied as integral to the ethos of the Western World.

¹ *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XIX, 2, p. 216.

² James B. P. Payne, *An Armorial of Jersey*, 1860-1865, p. 322.



PORTRAIT OF JEAN POINGDESTRE (JOHN POINDEXTER), (1609-1691), PAINTED C. 1635.

CHAPTER I

ISLAND BACKGROUND

"La famille Poingdestre tenait un rang distingué parmi les familles de l'île . . ."¹ It is with some such preamble that almost all biographical sketches of John Poindexter begin. In these egalitarian days it is often considered superfluous or even ostentatious to dwell on the heredity or genealogy of a biographical subject. But, regardless of one's views on the relative merits of heredity or environment, he would readily admit, upon even a casual study of Jersey and its history, that family background has always loomed large in the making of any man or institution connected with the island. Such was preeminently the case with John Poindexter—to the extent that, had his heritage been other than it was, he might never have embarked at all on the scholarly career that distinguished him throughout his life.

For the purposes of this study, however, we shall try to be brief in this particular aspect of his formation, and if the following résumé bears some vague resemblance to the Book of Genesis, the reader might reflect that in the Seventeenth Century most youths of whom anything in particular was expected were subjected—not once, but many times—by their elders to a litany of ancestral "greats" in the hope of instilling some of the same supposed merit in the young hearer by dint of repetition.

Until the late Nineteenth Century Jersey was the most insular of islands, and family records from that period can accordingly be searched with an accuracy and eye for detail not often encountered in more populous centers where wars and migrations have altered the face of things more than once.

The last migration of note to Jersey (with the exception of the current tourist migration) was that of the Normans in the Tenth Century. They struck root on the island with such a vengeance that practically all record of the pristine inhabitants vanished. The de Carteret family took up its abode on the island

¹ E. T. Nicolle, in "Notice Biographique," in Jean Poingdestre *Les Commentaires . . . sur l'Ancienne Coutume de Normandie* (Jersey, 1907), vi.

at that time and has remained the leading family ever since—to the point that no deed of alienation of their manor of St. Ouen exists subsequent or prior to the year 1,000, and they held it then.

In his chronicle of Rollo and his descendants, the Norman poet Wace, himself a native of Jersey, speaks of the De Carteret family and its participation in the conquest of England. They together with many other feudal Norman families are thus exalted:

De Meaine le vieil Giffrei,
E de Bohon li vieil Onfrei,
De Cartrai Onfrei e Maugier,
Qui esteit nouvel chevalier,
ede Garene i vint Willemes,
Mult li sist bien le chief li helms—²

According to family tradition, it was in the capacity of retainer or squire to the De Carteret family on some similar military foray that a shadowy medieval ancestor first became graced by his lord with a surname—Poingdestre, or pugnus dexter, in honor of his rough loyalty to his leader on the battlefield. The name is endemic to Jersey and occurs there on record first in the Thirteenth Century (very few island records prior to this period now exist) when Geoffrey and Raoul Poingdestre are mentioned as holding land on the island. In the Assize Role of 1309 Pierre Poingdestre, who is regarded as the first directly ascertainable ancestor of John Poindexter, made history by becoming involved in a legal brawl which has come down to us:

The Parish of St. Savior comes by 12 men: the jurors present also that Robert Sibelle senior is wont maliciously to cause the subjects of the Lord the King to be cited out of the islands, who comes and is convinced by the greater part, etc. Therefore his is committed to prison; and Thomas Hugh, clerk, likewise caused to be cited . . . and Peter Poingdestre likewise and he maliciously caused Robert Alayn

² Wace, *Roman de Rou*, from Maistre Wace's *Roman de Rou et les Ducs de Normandie* (ed. Hugo Andresen), Heilbronn, Gebr. Henninger, 1879, Zweiterband, III Theil, vv. 8473–8480.

and Jhon de Caley to be cited before the Justices delegated; . . . Afterwards there was brought here a certain letter at the suit of the aforesaid Peter Poingdestre to summon the Bailiff and many others of the island to be before the conservators of the privileges of the University of Paris, etc., to answer for the transgressions here done, etc. And the jurors say that that is done by the abetment and procurement of Joan, the sister and partner of the said Peter. Therefore their lands with their chattels shall remain in the . . .³

The family's rise on the social scale was rapid during the Fourteenth Century. Jourdain Poingdestre, probably a son of Pierre, became Prior of St. Michel du Valle in Guernsey, having been hitherto a monk of the Abbey of Mont St. Michel in France. A letter, written by him in excellent Latin for the time to another prior in 1327, shows him to have been a person of no mean learning and influence.⁴ Here is a passage therefrom to serve as a sample of his Latinity:

Religioso viro et honesto domino Ogero priori de Autritionia Suus humilis frater et socius Jourdanus Poindestre priour de Valle se totum cum salute. Sciatis me a domino abbate michi precepisse et mandasse litteras quod vobis mitterem materiem ac etiam modum breviorum impetrandi pro bonis nostris rehabendis et aliud breve quod sumus in protectione domini Regis, quorum brevium tenor talis qui sequitur talis est sicut per consilium habuimus videlicet: (etc.)

In 1367 Jean (Johan) Poingdestre was already serving as juré justicier, i.e., a jurat of the Royal Court of the island. Since his name appears on a *contrat* (deed) bearing that date, it is possible that he held the office anterior to the signing.⁵ With the sole exception of the bailiff (chief official of the island and representative of the King), the 12 jurats were the highest lay officials. They held office for life and performed a number of functions, executive and legislative, as well as judicial. The states, or parliament of the island was made up of the Bailiff, jurats, rectors of the parishes and, before the Reformation, the priors and abbots.

³ Rôles d'Assize, 1309 in *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1903.

⁴ *Cartulaire des Iles Normandes: Recueil de Documents concernant l'Histoire de ces Iles . . . Société Jersiaise*, 1924. pp. 111-113.

⁵ *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1880, pp. 190-193.

Similarly, John Poingdestre is mentioned as jurat on deeds bearing the dates 1370, 1377, 1382, 1388, and 1389. Judging from the fact that the eldest son held such a position in almost every subsequent generation of the family for centuries and that a man was usually of rather mature age when he undertook such a charge, it is more than likely that the Jean Poingdestre of 1367 was the father of the jurat of that name who served in 1382-1389, and who was elected Bailiff of Jersey in 1414.⁶

The dramatic changes in the course of Western European history are mirrored on a small scale in the annals of the Poingdestre family during the late Fourteenth and early Fifteenth centuries. It was during this period then the family passed from the ranks of the affluent yeomanry to become one of the chief feudal landholding families of Jersey.

In 1413 Guillemote Payn sold the feudal fief of Dielament to five purchasers. Among them was Jean Poingdestre, the young son of the Bailiff of 1414. The following is an extract of the transaction as recorded in the Cour d'Heritage of Jersey:

En 1413 . . . Guillemote Payne . . . vendit le fief de Dielament avec ses appartenances, a cinq acquireurs; savoir, Johan Lempriere, Seigneur de Rozel; Regnauld le Lorreur; Clement le Hardy; Perrot le Lorreur; et Johan Poingdestre.⁷

All the names mentioned therein are those of leading island families. The palmy days had begun for the Poingdestres. In 1419 this same Jean Poingdestre acquired by purchase a fief previously known a Moutier in the parish of St. Jean. Thereafter it was known by the title of Fief ès Poingdestres and remained in the family until about 1770. It is one of the fifteen "*francs fiefs*" of Jersey, i.e., it is held directly from the King, and the seigneur of it owes *comparence* at the Assize d'Heritage, i.e., he must swear allegiance annually to the sovereign or forfeit his fief. A Seventeenth Century reference gives us the history of this purchase:

⁶ *Almanach de la Nouvelle Chronique* (Jersey, 1893)

⁷ Records of the Cour d'Heritage, or Court of Inheritance, State House, St. Helier, Jersey.

L'an 1645 le 27e de Febvier: Mr. Philippe Poingdestre ayant droit ès heritages de Thomas Poingdestre. Il nous a apparu d'une letre en dapte de lan 1419 le jour du Samedy apres la feste St. Gilles comme Jean Poingdestre acquist de Collette de St. Helier le fieu du Moutier en la paroisse de St. Jean lequel fieu est tenu de norte Sire le Roy en chef et a droit de frofature, verp, guerp, essiage et a droit de chace comme est porte par les droits dou il possede.⁸

This new feudal seigneur, Jean Poingdestre, was appointed Lieutenant Bailiff in 1425, an office which he held until his death. His eldest son, another Jean Poingdestre, became Bailiff of Jersey in 1452, thus once again attaining for the family the highest political position on the island. He had previously been jurat in 1450. Besides the two feudal tenures which he inherited, he became seigneur of the Fief ès Hormans in 1446. His son, Jean Poingdestre, became Bailiff in 1476, having already married Helene, the daughter of another Bailiff, Nicolas Morin. He was also *connétable*, or constable of St. Saviour, i.e., he was the chief civil officer of the parish.⁹

The last member of the family to hold such high position until the time of our subject was Jean Poingdestre, son of the abovementioned, who was Lieutenant Bailiff from 1484 to 1500. Thereafter the offices of constable of the parish and jurat of the royal court were almost hereditary in the family for two centuries.

The diary of Sire Jean Hue, rector of St. Saviour during the latter years of the Fifteenth Century throws much light on the high repute enjoyed by the family at this time. We see that the head of the family and his wife were buried within the church, an honor reserved for nobles and high officials:

⁸ Extent de l'Île de Jersey, 1668, Charles II, *Société Jersiaise*, Jersey, 1882, Vol. X, p. 322. A note appended to this quotation reads: "Collette de St. Helier veuve de Pierre des Augrès, vendit, en 1419 à Johan Poingdestre et à Johanne sa femme, le fief du Moustier situé à St. Jean, pour 15 couronnes et 1/2 écu de vin et vente."

⁹ All these references to offices held by various members of the family are taken from old deeds and other documents deposited on the archives of the Société Jersiaise at St. Helier, Jersey. Lists of the bailiffs and jurats of the period based on them have been printed by the Société at various times.

A° MCCCCLXXVII mensis Julii John Poingdestre inhumat: in Ecclia dedit qz die septo Thesaur: Sti Salvatoris duos cab frūti: item obitb quigz cab.

And again:

A° MCCCCLXXVII Helena uxor J. Poingdestre filia Nicolai XV die Januar: Morin inhumata in Ecclia prope ditum Nicolaum in capella. Dedit qz iiii: cab frūti ex heretags suis vz unū cab: curato propter celebrand unam Missam quolibet an° in die inhumationis sue duobus capellanis unum propter orandum pro ipsa unū; pro data inhumationis in dita capella.¹⁰

Other burial entries and records of masses and donations dot the diary throughout the Fifteenth Century.

With the exception of the records of the Cour d'Heritage and a few chance deeds in the hands of private families, Jersey annals remaining from the Middle Ages are not extensive due to the great loss suffered in the last war when St. Lô and other adjacent Norman towns were almost totally demolished. Unfortunately these places housed most of the ecclesiastical and some of the legal archives appertaining to the Channel Islands during that period. The few documents which have come down to us (at least in reproduced form) are those which the Société Jersiaise copied and published during the last century. An interesting survival gives a list of Roman Catholic ecclesiastics of the Channel Islands who had received orders from the Bishop of Coutances in Normandy.¹¹ Among those listed we find the following entries:

(1500 Die xij^a mensis Marcii Concesse fuerunt Lrē dimissorie ad ordinem pbratus Johanni Poindextre proe S'cti Salvatoris de Gerseyo. 5 April 1519 pro silibz ad eūd Thome Poindextre Sti Salvator in ead.

Both members of the family abovementioned were sons of the Lieutenant Bailiff in 1484-1500. For the first time in two cen-

¹⁰ Diary of Sire Jean Hue, M.S., archives of Société Jersiaise, St. Helier, Jersey.

¹¹ Liste Des Ecclesiastiques Des Iles Anglo-Normandes, in G. E. Lee, *Estrais des Registres du Secretariat de l'Evêché de Coutances*, 1487-1577, Société Jersiaise, Jersey, 1887, pp. 19 & 39.

tures the son named Jean had, by becoming a cleric, forfeited his rights of inheritance, and the estate went to another son, George Poingdestre (1480-1544). This George and his son, Jean Poingdestre (c. 1504-1583), seem to have been less politically prominent than their predecessors, i.e., they confined themselves to parish and local activities, both being *connétables* of the parish and seigneurs of their ancestral estates. Both married into prominent island families (the Ahier and Hamptonne families respectively), but we shall not occupy ourselves further with their histories here, except to observe that it was probably Jean Poingdestre who led his family into Protestantism as did many prominent figures on the island at that time. During the reign of Elizabeth the ancient parish churches of the island were stripped of their "popish" ornaments, and chapels and priories, manorial chapels and wayside shrines in which the countryside abounded, were either destroyed or converted to secular uses. This change apparently wrought much greater stress at the time than we are aware of today, for there is a noticeable alteration in both the language of the local documents and the names of those recorded therein.

The Poingdestre family, however, survived the storm and emerged as champions of the new Calvinist faith. In fact, if we are to judge from the frequency with which they are mentioned in church records and from the importance of the positions which they held in parish affairs, we must assume that they took a more vital interest in church affairs than formerly.

This Jean Poingdestre, who had broken away from his ancestral faith to embrace the new doctrines of Geneva, a step more revolutionary in that day than it may appear to us now, had, among other children, a son, Edouard Poingdestre, to whom a moment's attention may be devoted, since he was destined to be the father of Jean Poingdestre, subject of this biography. The records of St. Saviour's parish tell us that on January 17, 1562, he married Marguerite, daughter of Clement Messervy and Catherine Lempriere. From this union was born Thomas Poingdestre (1581-1669),¹² heir to the fief and the guiding

¹² All the dates of marriages, deaths, and baptisms are taken from the registers of St. Saviour's parish, Jersey.

older brother mentioned later. From references and contemporary accounts as well as old records, we can judge that Edouard Poingdestre was a man of some education and strong convictions. He held the usual office of *connétable* and was, of course, seigneur of the fief, and was well known throughout the island. After the death of his first wife, whose mother had been a Lempriere and thus one of the chief gentry of Jersey, he married Pauline Ahier, a cousin, on July 31, 1606. These rather elderly people were the parents of Jean Poingdestre.

Thus the setting of the story is laid on a relatively insignificant island in the Channel with an almost Mediterranean climate. To the most prosperous family in a prosperous parish with its granite gothic church and granite farmhouses set amid lush hills and fields came Jean Poingdestre, or John Poindexter, as he was to be known in England, a younger son of a second marriage, but one who, with a handful of others, would gain distinction far beyond and alien to the accustomed insular ambitions of the place.

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

It is perhaps ironic in this Twentieth Century that one generally has to specify when he mentions Jersey by adding that it is located in the Channel Islands (sometimes even their location is hazy in the minds of the would-be educated), but that the whereabouts of New Jersey is clear enough even to most Europeans to obviate the necessity of further clarification. And somehow that irony with regard to "old" Jersey is not new. Although it has been the scene of human habitation practically as long as any place in Europe—it abounds in dolmens and other salient remnants of Neolithic culture—it has always been on the periphery of world affairs, and yet it has perhaps contributed more than its share in shaping world events. But its contributions have often been in the nature of exports. That oddity could explain why its cattle are far better known and more highly prized than the place of their origin; why the Cabots of Boston have been regarded with infinitely more veneration in their second home than they were on their native Jersey shores; why Lily Langtry made a greater stir abroad under her married name than she did at home as Miss Le Breton, the daughter of a respectable Anglican rector.

It is as a consequence of this insular phenomenon that Falle said of John Poindexter:¹

It was, indeed, a disadvantage to him to act in so narrow a Theatre, as this little Island, where he had not scope to exert his talents; yet even that makes for his honour as on the contrary nothing can be more despicable than a man placed in a large scene of action and wanting capacity to fill it with dignity.²

Because it is obvious even to the most casual observer of his career that, had he chosen to remain in England for the greater part of his days rather than to return to Jersey, he would have gained a more prominent place in British annals, it is note-

¹ Henceforth throughout this study the Anglicized spelling, John Poindexter, will be used, except of course, in direct quotations spelled otherwise, since he was generally known thus in public life.

² Philippe Falle, *An Account of Jersey* (London, 1694).

worthy that he decided to choose the less worldly of the two environments for the last quarter of his life. Thus, in a sense, Poindexter enjoyed what was probably to him the best of two worlds: he tasted worldly fame and activity on the stage of European affairs as well as the simpler joys of a childhood and mature age spent on his native island. But according to the accepted formula, it was largely in England that he gained the reputation which commends him to our notice.

It is also true at the same time, however, that if Jersey ever basked in the sun of international attention, it was during that very Seventeenth Century when Poindexter lived out his long life. It was that tenacious attachment of the island to the royalist cause which he so ardently shared that caused an English monarch to come to its shores for the first time with perhaps one exception.³ The future Charles II was first sent by his father for safety to Jersey, where he remained from April 17, 1646 to June 27 of the same year, when he was summoned to join his mother at Fontainebleau. It was in Jersey on February 17, 1649 where he was first proclaimed King of England. Finally, in September of 1649 he returned to Jersey with the Duke of York and 300 followers and remained there until February of 1650.⁴

It was in connection with these events that the island drew down upon itself the wrath of the Parliamentarians but at the same time gained momentarily a proportion of world attention hitherto denied it.

But these events still lay in the future when the records of St. Saviour's Church tell us that one Jean Poingdestre was baptized on April 16, 1609. The entry goes on to inform us that he was the son of Edouard Poingdestre and Pauline Ahier, his second wife, the daughter of a small landholder of the same

³ According to an ancient tradition substantiated by all early Jersey historians (e.g., Poingdestre and Falle) and recorded in Westminster Abbey on the monument of a descendant, Sir Thomas Le Hardy, Clement Le Hardy (d.e. 1494) sheltered Henry Tudor, then Earl of Richmond, later Henry VIII in his Jersey home for some days during his return to Normandy after an unsuccessful attempt upon England.

⁴ Edith Carey, *The Channel Islands* (London, 1904), pp. 125-129.

parish. The man who stood as godfather to the infant was none other than his elder brother, Thomas Poingdestre, son of the same Edouard and his first wife, Marguerite Messervy. As an American historian has said of another Poindexter, whose life was the subject of his doctoral dissertation, "the Poindexters were a prolific family and had little ingenuity in contriving names."⁵ These later American Poindexters apparently adhered rigidly to the earlier Jersey tradition of clinging forever to a few Christian names assigned for the family use in some remote time. The lack of variety makes the records confusing at some points when two people with identical names appear simultaneously. The case in point would approach this complexity, were it not for a clear difference of ages, because the same Edouard Poingdestre had another son by his above-mentioned second wife who was baptized on October 16, 1613 and named likewise Thomas Poingdestre. Thus John had both an elder half-brother and a younger full brother named Thomas. The former stood as his godfather in 1609.⁶ The younger Thomas Poingdestre, on the other hand, received a clerical education, finally matriculating from King's College, Cambridge on Easter of 1631 and later was created Bachelor of Divinity from Exeter College, Oxford, on August 31, 1636.⁷ Upon the death of his relative, Nicholas Effard, Thomas Poingdestre became rector of the parish of St. Saviour, a position which he held until his death. The accompanying genealogical chart will hopefully clarify some of these vagaries of dates and nomenclature.

Although the eldest male member of the Poingdestre family had been a feudal lord of a Jersey fief since it was acquired in 1419 by Jean Poingdestre, bailiff of Jersey, the family did not seem to reside often on their fief. They lived instead where they had lived since time immemorial: on a parcel of land in the parish of St. Saviour which had been held by the direct line of

⁵ Mack Swearingen, *The Early Life of George Poindexter*, (New Orleans, 1934), p. 15.

⁶ Registers of the Parish of St. Saviour, Jersey.

⁷ J. and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, part I, Vol. III.

the family at least as early as 1309.⁸ In contrast to the bleak northern parish of St. Jean, where their fief ès Poingdestres largely lay, the family property in St. Saviour's was situated in a fertile, well-watered valley near the handsome gothic church and not far from the principal town of St. Helier. The ancient seat of the family, later called Swan Farm, was a typical Jersey farmhouse built in veritably cyclopean style out of the granite rock found throughout the island. The house remains today behind the later and more pretentious Poindexter house called Grainville Manor. It was in the former, more humble abode that John Poindexter was born in 1609. From surviving family records of the period¹⁰ as well as from contemporary testimony, the Poingdestre family were among the leading gentry of the island. They were related both to the Lemprières and the De Carterets, the two most powerful Jersey families. Thus they were accustomed to such cultured intercourse as the island afforded and it was into this milieu that John Poindexter was born.

Since Jersey was still very much a feudal country, young John Poindexter had very poor prospects as far as real inheritance was concerned. He was not only a younger son, but a son by a second marriage. As a consequence he sought other avenues of advancement, and the one most forcefully indicated both by his scholarly bent and early attainments and by his environment was the clerical state. Jersey at the time of his birth was still strongly Calvinist in inclination, though adhering verbally to the Church of England. In addition to this trait, his Poingdestre ancestors had always been pillars of the parish from the Catholic Middle Ages to his own time. We have seen their activities in that field in the previous chapter. Very probably his proximate impetus in that direction came from his relative, Nicholas Effard, the rector of the parish at the time of his birth and during his childhood. His elder brother Thomas was married to Elizabeth Effard, the rector's daughter. Effard had a

⁸ Rôles d'Assises, 1309, Parish of St. Saviour, Jersey.

⁹ Joan Stevens, *Old Jersey Houses* (Jersey, 1965) p. 219.

¹⁰ e.g., a livre de droits inscribed "Thomas Poingdestre, 1690," in the possession of the author.

Guernsey father (Jean Effard) and a Jersey mother (Elizabeth Perrin) and had been in his youth one of the first scholars at Elizabeth College in Guernsey under the tutelage of none other than Adrien Saravia, a Fleming who later migrated to England and became one of the translators of the Authorized Version of the Bible.¹¹ In the registers of the Huguenot Waloon Church at Southampton we find that on April 6, 1572, "Nicolas Effard et Nicolas Careye, tous deux escolliers a Mestre Adrien Saravia, recut la Cene a l'Eglise de Southampton." Nicholas Effard had married on July 21, 1587, Sara de Caumont, daughter of the Rev. Pierre de Caumont, a prominent Huguenot minister from Normandy living in Jersey.¹²

Although we have no precise records to that effect, the scene of John Poindexter's early studies was without doubt the free Grammar School of St. Mannelier, founded at St. Saviour's in 1477 by Jean Hue, the Catholic rector of that period.¹³ It continued in existence until its endowments were absorbed by Victoria College in 1852. Practically all the male members of the Poingdestre family had attended the school since its inception, and Philippe Poingdestre, a nephew of John, became regent of the school after receiving his B.A. from Jesus College, Oxford, on November 11, 1641.¹⁴

Thus it was probably either Adrian Saravia or Nicholas Effard, or both, who were instrumental in placing the promising youth first in St. Mannelier's and then in sending him to England for university studies. He entered Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a sizar on Easter of 1626. There he received his baccalaureate at the end of 1629 and his master of arts three years later, in 1633.¹⁵

¹¹ Edith Carey, *op. cit.* pp. 179-180.

¹² Registers of Parish of St. Saviour's, Jersey.

¹³ E. T. Nicolle, in "Notice Biographique," in Jean Poingdestre *Les Commentaires . . . sur l'Ancienne Coutume de Normandie* (Jersey, 1907), vi.

¹⁴ A letter exists at St. Ouen's Manor addressed to Poindexter by Jean Pallot, Regent of St. Mannelier in 1637, asking for advice and assistance in his work.

¹⁵ J. and J. A. Venn, *op. cit.* part 1, Vol. III.

It is interesting to note that Poindexter's stay at Cambridge coincides almost exactly with that of Milton. The latter entered Christ's College on February 12, 1625, received his B.A. in 1629 and his M.A. in 1632.¹⁶ In an academic community as intimate as Cambridge in the Seventeenth Century, it is improbable that the paths of these two men with similar interests in many regards should not have crossed; it is possible that they were acquainted with each other. Both were steeped in the learning of the classical past as well as that of the Middle Ages and Renaissance; both had a vital interest in politics as well as in scholarly pursuits. Therein lay the similarities. But whereas Milton had a splendid lyric gift that seemed to contrast strangely with his puritan poetical views, Poingdestre was staunchly Royalist all his life but leaned more to historical prose and criticism than to aesthetic activities. This parallel between the two men is by no means irrelevant to this study as later developments will show, for both were thereafter considered for the position of Latin secretary by two warring governments; one accepted the proffered post; the other declined the offer.

Cambridge was at that time, as later, a stronghold of Puritan and low Church views, as Oxford was generally a citadel of the Royalist and High Church party. It is not strange that a young Jerseyman of that date would have been sent initially to a place with Calvinist leanings, nor is it strange that later in his career he should have chosen Oxford as the scene for continuing his scholarly activities. Here is the reason for that seeming anomaly: Jersey, as we have seen, became Calvinistic after the Reformation because of its cultural affinity with neighboring Normandy and France, for at that period the people of the island were still thoroughly Norman-French in their language and institutions, although they had been subjects of the English king since 1066. When they became his subjects, the English sovereign was, of course, a Norman lord, and when John lost his French possessions in the Thirteenth Century, the Channel Islands remained loyal to him as the rightful Norman lord, though they had little in common with his English subjects across the Chan-

¹⁶ Harris F. Fletcher, *Complete Poetical Works of John Milton* (Boston, 1941), p. 12.

nel. (Thus the Queen of England can still style herself Duchess of Normandy.) In 1499 the Channel Islands were transferred by a Papal Bull from the Diocese of the Bishop of Coutances in Normandy to that of Winchester in England, but culturally they were as close to Normandy as they were politically loyal to England. When the Reformation did come, Calvinism found protection in the islands under the English aegis, whereas it did not thrive under the Catholic monarchs of France. So far, so good; but then the paradox arose that possibly explains Poindexter's change from Oxford to Cambridge: the De Carteret family of Jersey adhered strongly to the royal banner from the beginning of the differences with the Parliamentarians in England. Due to their predominance in Jersey and their connections with all the other gentle families there, the whole island with a few notable exceptions became royalist likewise (in contrast to Guernsey, which was Parliamentarian) and soon gravitated towards Anglicanism.

In 1635 Charles I showed an additional favor to the De Carteret family (of whom he was very fond) and the whole island by the institution of the King Charles I Channel Island Fellowships at Exeter College, Oxford (later converted to Scholarships and Exhibitions). Therefore, Poindexter was following the trend of events and attitudes on his native island when, from October 9, 1635, until November 3, 1636, his name is found inscribed on the registers of Exeter College, Oxford, as "gentleman commoner." He was the first Jerseyman to avail himself of this new foundation. He was elected fellow of Exeter College on August 4, 1635 but not admitted until August 4, 1635.¹⁷

Poindexter's departure from Cambridge and entry into Oxford marks the end of his basically formative period and the beginning of his public career and literary endeavors. It was then that he ceased to be merely a Jerseyman studying in England and became instead a full-fledged actor on the stage of British events.

¹⁷ Boase, *Registrum Coll. Exon*, p. 104.

CHAPTER III PUBLIC LIFE BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH

Poindexter was considered one of the most learned men at the University.¹ According to one noted Jersey historian, "The beautifullest Greek types of the Stephens scarce excelled his handwriting in that language."² Although he held his fellowship for twelve years, Poindexter's rapidly increasing fame kept him away from the University for long periods of time, as his frequent absences from collegiate activities reveal. The Journal of Benjamin La Cloche informs us that in 1638 he was tutor to the children of Lord Pembroke and Montgomery, grand chamberlain of the King.³ We learn from the same source that at that period he gave two silver cups to his parish of St. Saviour's. From these two entries we can surmise that his worldly condition as well as his scholarly renown had been notably enhanced during his Oxford years.

In an age when private libraries were a rarity and public collections of books and manuscripts were sparse and circumscribed by many prohibitions, Oxford must have afforded Poindexter a fertile field for the research, the fruits of which his later writings reveal. His position as fellow gave him the leisure for this reading, and his tutorship and other emoluments gave him the means to sustain it. Another source of income was placed at his disposal in the form of an ecclesiastical benefice when he was ordained deacon of the Anglican church at York in 1641.⁴

Again he was following trends on his native island in taking Anglican orders, because Episcopalianism had been brought to Jersey in 1620, when David Bandinel, or Bandinelli, an Italian, had been installed as Dean and the Book of Common Prayer officially instituted. The De Carterets and the other leading

¹ E. T. Nicolle in preface to Jean Poingdestre, *Les Commentaires sur l'Ancienne Coutume de Normandie* (Jersey, 1907), p. vi.

² Philippe Falle, *Account of Jersey* (London, 1694), p. xii.

³ Journal of Benjamin La Cloche in *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, Vol. II, p. 476.

⁴ G. R. Balleine, *A Biographical Dictionary of Jersey* (London, 1958), p. 552.

island families were among the first to embrace the new usage. By becoming deacon Poindexter could occupy himself as fully in the pursuit of a clerical life as if he had been ordained to the priesthood. Such procedure was not uncommon at that time, and the recipient of such an office was not looked upon askance if he continued to follow a basically secular path in life.

It was under these auspices that he began to make the notes which eventually resulted in several complete works. A prominent Jersey writer has observed with regard to Poindexter's abilities and studious habits:

M. Poingdestre était un homme d'un mérite singulier, dont le génie, naturellement fécond, s'était enrichi par une culture assidue. Il s'était nourri l'esprit et forme le goût par la lecture des écrits que l'antiquité nous a laissés comme un legs précieux. Les lois civiles lui étaient familières; il les avait méditées avec soin, et en avait fait son étude favorite. Personne mieux que lui n'a connu notre histoire, nos institutions, les privilèges dont nous jouissons, les lois qui nous gouvernent. Il s'en était occupé de bonne heure, et avec une assiduité que ne se ralentit jamais jusqu'au dernier moment de sa vie. Quelques ouvrages, que nous aimerions à voir livrés à la publicité, restent encore pour démontrer que ses veilles n'étaient pas stériles, ni ses recherches sans profit.⁵

The editor of this history of Jersey was equally eulogistic when he spoke of his scholarly merits:

Dès son jeune âge Jean Poingdestre se fit remarquer par son talent, et à l'université d'Oxford, où son père l'envoya, il devint "Fellow" du college Exeter en 1636 et fit des études tellement sérieuses des langues classiques qu'on le comptait parmi les hommes les plus érudits du siècle, principalement à cause de sa connaissance de la langue grecque.⁶

The range of his interests reflects Poindexter's faithful adherence to the Renaissance ideal of the universal man. One unpublished manuscript which has always remained in the hands

⁵ Robert Pison Maret, "Notice sur la Vie et les Ecrits de Mons. Le Geyt," quoted from William Nicolle (ed.) in his preface to Jean Poingdestre, *Caesarea* (Jersey, 1889).

⁶ William Nicolle (ed.) in his preface to *Caesarea* (Sup. cit.)

of the family throws light on an unusual interest of his that is not evident in his other works. The work in question is a lengthy treatise on medicine written in Poindexter's own hand in Latin with annotations and glosses in Greek. Whether it is entirely of his own composition or rather a compilation of notes on the subject taken from lectures and readings at Oxford is not clear. But in either case the mere fact that so broad a treatment of a popular Seventeenth Century subject was thus laboriously gathered and digested is significant. The work could be a relic of his Oxford days although the extant copy was probably made by him in his latter years since the handwriting, paper, and format all closely resemble his manuscript history of Jersey now at the British Museum. In the back of the vellum-bound volume is a curious collection of prescriptions. In the front of the volume we find the name Messervy in one place (the Messervy family were cousins of Poindexter) and in another a baptismal record of a nephew, Jean Poindestre, recorded in another hand in 1657.⁷

It was impossible that the renown of a promising young scholar of Royalist sympathies should not have reached the court, and such was shortly the case. About 1641 he obtained a position in the entourage of Lord Digby, Secretary of State.⁸

Other references to Poindexter during this period show that his abilities were often in demand among leading public figures both in his capacity as a legal expert and as an outstanding Latinist and historian.

In 1648 Poindexter's life as a privileged scholar at Oxford and a man of affairs at the court was brought to an abrupt end when he, together with many others, was expelled from his fellowship by the Parliamentary visitors because of his Royalist sympathies at a time when the cause of Charles I was growing desperate. The immediate pretext given for the expulsion was his long absence from the University, but when we read the college records, we discover that others equally given to long

⁷ John Poindexter, *Lectures on Medicine*, ms. in possession of the author, written probably in Jersey c.1680.

⁸ Boase, *Registrum Coll. Oxon*, p. 104.

absences were retained, and some who had been assiduously present were expelled on other pretexts. All his biographers agree on the underlying cause.⁹

⁹ See G. R. Balleine, *A Biographical Dictionary of Jersey*, *sup. cit.*, p. 552, and E. T. Nicolle in preface to Poingdestre, *Les Commentaires*, *sup. cit.*, vii.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMONWEALTH PERIOD

Since the Royalist cause in England was growing steadily worse, Poindexter returned to Jersey, which by this time was one of the few remaining Stuart strongholds in the British Isles.

As has been observed previously, the Prince of Wales, (the future Charles II) had arrived in Jersey in the company of the Chancellor, Sir Edward Hyde, and members of the council on April 17, 1646, whereupon he took up residence in Elizabeth Castle, a fortress built on a rock in the harbor of St. Aubin's Bay. He remained there until June 25 of the same year, but the other members of the Council remained after his departure. On October 19 of 1646 the Lords Capel and Hopton, Sir Edward Hyde, and Sir George Carteret entered into the so called Articles of Association for the defence of Jersey. Hyde then left Jersey to attend upon the Prince of Wales in France.

News of the execution of King Charles I arrived in Jersey on February 9, 1649, and, on February 18 Charles II was proclaimed King in the Market Place at St. Helier by the Vicomte of Jersey Laurens Hamptonne.

After many precautions and preparations, Charles II, accompanied by the Duke of York, arrived in Jersey on September 17, 1649, and again took up residence in Elizabeth Castle, although he frequently stayed at the homes of the island gentry during his stay there. The leading Jersey families had an opportunity, as they never would have otherwise, to associate on fairly equal terms with members of the Court and to converse frequently with the King. A notorious and fairly well-documented illegitimate son of Charles II and Marguerite De Carteret was one result of this Royal visit.¹ On October 23 at a Council at Elizabeth Castle Charles II signed a declaration in assertion of his rights addressed to all his subjects.

On February 13, 1650, Charles left Jersey for Breda to meet the Scottish Commission, and the Duke of York returned to France soon thereafter, but other members of the court remained there for a time. Finally, on October 20, 1651, a Parli-

¹ Edith F. Carey, *The Channel Islands* (London, 1904), pp. 131-146.

amentary fleet under Admiral Blake arrived off the island. In a few days troops under Colonel James Heane forced a landing and subjugated all the strongholds on the island except Elizabeth Castle, which did not capitulate until it had withstood a siege of 50 days. John Poindexter, along with members of the Court and all the leading Royalists of the Island, was present in the castle, during the siege. Before Heane (or Haines) had taken the castle, George Carteret sent Poindexter directly to the King at Paris to report upon the state of the besieged Royalists in Jersey. This personal mission of Poindexter to the King shows the trust and respect accorded him by his contemporaries. His bi-lingual excellence probably entered into his recommendation for the post. He apparently stayed at the Louvre, where the King was then in residence. King Charles tried in vain to aid Poindexter by obtaining aid from the French Court, but all help was withheld.² After four weeks he returned to Jersey with orders to make the best possible terms with the Parliamentarians.³

The castle fell in December of 1651 and Poindexter took part in drawing up the treaty of capitulation.⁴

It appears that, though Poindexter left the island for some time after the surrender of the castle, he returned shortly thereafter, for in 1654 he presented a child for baptism at the church of St. Saviour, and he served on the vestry of that parish in 1656 and 1657.⁵ Furthermore, royalist that he was, he seems to have effected some sort of reconciliation with the Parliamentary leaders in Jersey. Among others of the puritan party who consulted him on various matters was John Gibbon, the antiquary and herald, who spent some time on the island in 1655 while his cousin, Robert Gibbon, was governor. Gibbon made notes from Poindexter's copious documents concerning Jersey history.⁶

² E. T. Nicolle, "Notice Biographique," in Jean Poingdestre, *Les Commentaires* (Jersey, 1907), vii.

³ *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, Vol. II, p. 129.

⁴ Jean Chevalier, Journal, 1643-1651, in *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1906.

⁵ Register of St. Saviour's Parish, Jersey.

⁶ *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, Vol. II, p. 129.

A striking illustration of his amicable relations with the Parliamentary government is furnished by a contemporary document bearing the date of July 15, 1656, wherein the Council of State referred a legal case concerning inheritance to the following Jersey notables: Michel and Jacques Lemprière, Philippe Le Geyt, Jean Poingdestre, and Laurens Hamptonne as being the most knowledgeable men available in Jersey law and custom.⁷

From 1657 to 1659 Poingdestre's name does not occur in the Jersey records, and it is possible that he spent at least part of this time in Virginia. George Poindexter, his nephew (a son of his half-brother Thomas), emigrated to Virginia in that year and acquired land in Gloucester County and later at Middle Plantation (now called Williamsburg).⁸ He later obtained more land by the importation of several persons to the colony. One of these persons was Susannah Poindexter, his wife, supposedly the daughter of a high court official, whose anger at the marriage forced George Poindexter's departure from Jersey.

Another of these emigrants may have been John Poindexter.⁹ Whether or not this surmise is correct, Virginia would have been a logical and convenient place for a Royalist to visit in such adverse times. In any case George Poindexter, the nephew, established himself firmly in the "Old Dominion," where he became a prosperous planter, ship-owner, and vestryman of his tory Bruton Parish church in Williamsburg. In 1690 he built a handsome house in New Kent County called "Christ's Cross." This building still stands and is considered one of the outstanding pre-Georgian edifices in Northern America.¹⁰ From the offspring of this nephew descended a numerous progeny who settled throughout the South and often distinguished themselves

⁷ Office of Roles, London, July 15, 1656 (Domestic Series, p. 19).

⁸ *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Richmond, 1911), Vol. XIX, no. 3, pp. 326-327. George Poindexter was baptized in St. Saviour's Church on December 23, 1627. The Virginia records mention his cousin Peter Effard, who emigrated with him. Payne's *Armorial* and other old records mention George Poindexter as having "settled in Virginia, N.A."

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ H. C. Forman, *The Architecture of the Old South* (Harvard, 1948), p. 70-72.

in law and politics. Perhaps the best known member of the American branch of the family was George Poindexter (1779–1853), U.S. senator and governor of Mississippi.¹¹

This two-year period of obscurity came to an end in 1659 when Poindexter's name again appears in the Jersey records. On this occasion we find the following entry in the parish of St. Lawrence: "Jean Poingdestre gent. se Maria a Diē Haptōe le 16 Feb. 1659." Thus we find that our bachelor scholar married Anne Hamptonne, the daughter of the same Laurens Hamptonne, who, as Vicomte of Jersey in 1649, had proclaimed Charles II King of England. Laurens Hamptonne was a distant relative of Poindexter and a close friend of Charles II during his stay in Jersey. Well-substantiated tradition even has it that Charles stayed at the family estate in the Parish of St. Lawrence, likewise called Hamptonne. Various mementoes of his visits were still preserved there in the Nineteenth Century.¹²

It was by a fortunate quirk of fate that this entry came down to us. Had the marriage taken place in the parish of St. Saviour, we would have had no record of it, for the marriage register there ceases from September 3, 1645 until June 18, 1660. Thomas Poingdestre, the younger brother of John, was rector of St. Saviour's from 1638 until 1689, and a notation of his, written during that period in the register attributes this deficiency of records to the *insouciance* of the parish clerk.

Two children were born of this union—the only children of John Poindexter: Charles Poingdestre, who was baptized on May 15, 1662, at the church of St. John the Baptist at Oxford, and Elizabeth Poingdestre, who married George Bandinel, Seigneur of Melèches and Vicomte of Jersey.¹³

By this period Poindexter's abilities were well known and fully appreciated in many quarters, but he never seemed inclined to thrust himself into public notice except when the exigencies of the situation demanded such an action. He was not

¹¹ Mack Swearingen, *The Early Life of George Poindexter* (Tulane, 1934.)

¹² James B. P. Payne, *An Armorial of Jersey* (Jersey, 1860–1865), pp. 177–178.

¹³ E. T. Nicolle, "Notice . . ." viii.

only well-acquainted with many of the celebrated men of his time, but he also enjoyed their confidence. One with whom he formed a firm friendship was Edward Hyde, chancellor of England and later the Earl of Clarendon. They grew to know each other well during their days of mutual exile in Jersey.

If no other record or document existed which would entitle Poindexter to be known to posterity as a Latin scholar, a letter written on March 7, 1652, would suffice for the bestowal of that distinction. The letter was occasioned by the need of a Latin Secretary for the King, and was written by the Secretary of State, Edward Nicholas, to Hyde, who had apparently already recommended Poindexter for the position. It reads in part:

If you shall make Poindexter desire to serve me in the place of a Secretary, I am so very well satisfied of his honesty and abilities as I shall willingly entertain him.¹⁴

For some reason which has not come down to us, Poindexter rejected Hyde's suggestion that he serve as Latin Secretary to the exiled Charles II.¹⁵ It is again a curious parallel that Milton was offered the position of Latin Secretary to the Parliamentarian Council of State in February of 1649, but at the same time, it is just as curious a paradox that, whereas Milton was not inclined to politics and public office, he accepted the post, while John Poindexter, who later held several public offices, refused the proffered position. But the offer was a testimony of his ability in Latin composition.

One other interesting "document" concerning Poindexter has come down to us during this period, or perhaps from a few years earlier. It is a portrait of Poindexter and it still exists (it is reproduced on the frontispiece of this work) in the home of a direct descendant of Poindexter.¹⁶ From an inscription on the painting which was presumably written at the time, we surmise that it was painted in 1635. It reads: "Ce que tu vois de l'homme

¹⁴ Nicholas Papers (Camden Society), Vol. I, p. 288.

¹⁵ G. R. Balleine, *A Biographic Dictionary of Jersey* (London, 1957) p. 552.

¹⁶ The portrait now belongs to Mrs. Ferguson Roydhouse, née, Mary Elaline Poingdestre of Teddington, Middlesex.

n'est pas l'homme aetat 27." This legend is rather typical of the Seventeenth Century view that the spirit, not the visible flesh makes the man. The figure is clothed in clerical garb and is apparently seated at a desk. A watch is opened on the surface of the desk, and Poindexter's left hand holds a partially-opened book with Greek characters visible on the open page. Two rents in the canvas are somewhat questionably attributed by family tradition to Parliamentary soldiers who mistook the visage for that of Charles I.¹⁷ In any case the portrait affords us the rare privilege of gazing upon the face of a scholar of that age with his Richelieu-like beard and moustache and penetrating eyes. Doubtless John Poindexter had what would be called a "presence." The painting hung for two hundred years at Grainville Manor, the house begun by John Poindexter himself on the estate of his birth, and was taken to England during the First World War and remains there now.¹⁸ It is the only known contemporary likeness of a Jerseyman of the early Seventeenth Century.

Throughout the duration of the Commonwealth Poindexter had an excellent opportunity to converse with leading men of his time with whom he would not have perhaps had so intimate an acquaintance had they been in England under more normal circumstances. He was likewise able to study, meditate, and make notes which were later to take the form of books and commentaries.

¹⁷ J. P. Landers, "Jean Poingdestre," in *Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise* (Jersey, 1964), Vol. 18, pp. 405-408.

¹⁸ Notes of Edward Clement Poingdestre in possession of the author.

CHAPTER V

THE RESTORATION AND SUBSEQUENT PUBLIC LIFE

The Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England was an occasion of much rejoicing in Jersey. Members of the De Carteret family and other Court notables who remained in exile in France with the King, returned triumphantly with him to London. And, despite his reputation for ingratitude, he rewarded many of his Jersey supporters, particularly the De Carterets, with offices, land, and pensions. A striking example of this largesse was Charles' gift of a large tract of land in America to Sir George Carteret in 1659 which the latter appropriately named New Jersey.

In a less spectacular way John Poindexter was a recipient of favors, direct and indirect, from the Monarch. He returned straightway to Oxford, where in 1662 he was living at the lodge of Thomas Clayton, Warden of Merton College.¹ Apparently his whole family was living in England with him at the time, for we have already noted the baptism of his son, Charles Poindexter, at Oxford during that same year. Although he did not regain his fellowship at Exeter College, he did enjoy income from several sources in addition to his own ecclesiastical living and his wife's personal fortune.

The scholarly side of Poindexter's personality has always been amply stressed by his biographers and admirers, but no one seems to have made more than a bare mention of his obvious ability as a pedagogue. His previous position as tutor has already been noted. We now learn that in 1662 he served as official mentor to the son of the Earl of Carnarvon.² Clearly Poindexter did not suffer from that proverbial affliction of scholars, the inability to teach and to communicate himself effectively to others. That he spoke well is obvious; otherwise he would never have been chosen to go on a personal mission to the King. Much of his legal activity was likewise conducted on an oral basis at a time when oratory was still considered essential to a public figure.

¹ Wood, *Life and Times*; Ed. A. Clarke (Oxford) Vol. 1, p. 440.

² *Ibid.*

Poindexter's residence at Oxford lasted apparently until 1668, when he returned to Jersey to take office as Lieutenant Bailiff of the Royal Court.³ The bailiff, Edward De Carteret had chosen Poindexter to take the place of Jean Pípon, who had retired in 1668 because of age and infirmity. The position of Lieutenant Bailiff was at that time a post of great trust and responsibility, because the Bailiff himself was often little more than a figure-head. In fact, the latter office had become almost hereditary in the De Carteret family. Consequently, it was the Lieutenant who actually administered the affairs of the island in many cases.

Since law required that a Bailiff or his lieutenant must also be a jurat, and since a vacancy had occurred on the bench, the King issued a Sign Manual recommending Poindexter's election to that post.⁴ The document reads thus:

Charles Rex

Whereas we are certainly informed of the constant loyalty and zeal to our service which Mr. John Poindexter hath demonstrated upon all occasions, and that he is a man very well knowing both in the Civil and Municipal Laws, and chiefly in those which are in force in our island of Jersey and thereby able to do us and that his native country, very good service in the administration of Justice there. We have thought fit as well for his own encouragement, as for the good of the inhabitants of our said Island, to require you, as we do by these presents, to issue out your Order for his immediate election to the place and office of Jurat there, in which we expect your ready compliance. And so we bid you farewell. Given at our Court at Whitehall the 22nd day of February in the 19th year of our reign (1667-8).

By his Majesty's Command,
Arlington.

To our Trusty and well-beloved Sir Edward de Carteret our Bayliff of our Island of Jersey; to his Lieut.-Bayliff, and to the Jurats of that our said Island, and to every of them, Jersey.

³ E. T. Nicolle, in "Notice Biographique," in Jean Poingdestre *Les Commentaires . . . sur l'Ancienne Coutume de Normandie* (Jersey, 1907), vi.

⁴ S. P. Dom Entry Books 30, f. 7, 21, p. 63.

In Seventeenth Century Jersey such a letter on the part of the King would have removed all constitutional difficulties. A contemporary writer on Jersey laws and customs has observed in reference to this case:

En 1668 un juré fut élu par lettres de recommandation du Roy. C'était un homme d'érudition et de crédit à la Cour, et il devait revenir d'Angleterre, où il était demeuré depuis le rétablissement du Roy Charles II. Il avait fait accord avec le Bailly pour la place de Lieutenant, et, selon la Coutume, il fallait le remettre sur le banc avant qu'il vint à chaire. Il ne serait pas plus difficile d'établir des Lieutenants-Baillis de Roy, que des Jurés par sa recommandation, et peu de tels exemples feraient bientôt perdre aux Baillis et aux haitans leur ancien privilège.⁵

In any case, the Royal Court made no effort to resist the King's desires and immediately acted upon his mandates, as the following act illustrates:

L'an 1668, le 23e jour de May.

Pardevant Messire Edouard de Carteret, Chevalier, etc., Bailly de l'Île de Jersey, assisté d'Elie Dumaresq, Jean Pípon et Thomas Pípon, Jurés; survenu Josué de Carteret, survenus aussy Edouard Romeril et Jean de la Cloche survenue aussy Georges Dumaresq.

Le bon plaisir du Roy ayant été par Lettres expresses à la Justice de déclarer son vouloir pour l'Election d'un Juré de cette isle de Jersey.

Il est ordonné que l'on y procédera Dimanche prochain à l'issue du Service Divin par toutes les paroisses. A cet effet une translation des susdites Lettres y sera lèue publiquement.⁶

For public consumption, however, the Royal Court published the following letter in order to avoid any embarrassing questions regarding procedure:

L'an 1668, le 27 Mai.

Monsr. le Gouverneur present.

Pardevant Messire Edouard de Carteret, Chevalier, etc., Bailly de

⁵ Philippe Le Geyt, *Les Manuscripts sur la Constitution, les Loïs, et les Usages de Cette Île* (Jersey, 1846) Vol. IV, p. 65.

⁶ Act of the Royal Court of Jersey, May 23, 1668.

l'Isle de Jersey, assisté de François de Carteret, Elie Dumaresq, Josué de Carteret, Jean Pípon, Thomas Pípon, Edouard Romeril, Georges Dumaresq et Jean de la Cloche, Jurés.

Jean Poingdestre Gentilhomme (ayant eu la pluralité de suffrages du peuple a été ce jourd'hui admis et sermenté Jure-Justicier de la Cour Royale de ceste Isle de Jersey.⁷

On January 21, 1668–1669 John Poindexter was sworn in as Lieutenant Bailiff and on that same day the Bailiff, who was about to leave the Island, handed over to him the state seal at a session of the Court. The act is recorded thus:

Suivant la nomination de Messire Edouard de Carteret, Chevalier, etc., et approbation de la Justice. Jean Poingdestre Escuyer a ce jour pris serment de Lieutenant dudit Sieur Bailly, lequel ayant témoigné être présent à partir de ce pais a délivré à mesme temps en Cour le Sceau de ladite Isle à sondit Lieutenant.⁸

For the subsequent eight years Poindexter, though technically Lieutenant Bailiff, served as Bailiff, since the latter officer was absent from the island during the whole period. The entire burden of government fell upon his shoulders, and it is to his credit that under his administration the Royal Court gained the esteem of the Jersey people and the English government to an extent never before attained.

In 1676 he resigned from the office of Lieutenant Bailiff, but retained that of Jurat until the time of his death. His reason for retiring from the former office was doubtless based on a desire to be free from heavy political burdens in order to return to his accustomed life of study and writing—particularly since he was eager to reduce to literary form the fruits of his life-long research. One or two writers⁹ have attributed his retirement from the position of Lieutenant Bailiff to an alleged informality in his original appointment to that post. But this view is not tenable: first, because there is no contemporary testimony to

⁷ Act of the Royal Court of Jersey, May 27, 1668.

⁸ Chefs Plaidis d'Heritage, Jersey Court, January 21, 1669.

⁹ J. B. Payne, *Armorial*, p. 322.

that effect, and secondly, because, had the attainment of one office been the result of improper procedure, that of the other would have been rendered improper also. But, as a matter of fact, he remained a jurat for the rest of his life, and his tenure would not have been possible had there been any irregularity in the receipt of either office.

It was in consequence of his decision to retire that on June 15, 1676, his resignation from the office of Lieutenant Bailiff was accepted by Edouard de Carteret in the following act:

Monsr. le Bailly ayant été requis par Jean Poingdestre Escr. qui a par diverses années exercé les fonctions de ladite charge de Bailly en qualité de son Lieutenant, de luy accorder sa décharge de Lieutenant Bailly, elle luy a esté ottroyée, avec tesmoignage de s'en esté bien acquitté.¹⁰

On the day of Poindexter's retirement Phillipe Le Geyt, the previously mentioned commentator on the laws and customs of Jersey, and a close friend of the former, was sworn in as Lieutenant Bailiff in Poindexter's place.

Thus, although he continued to serve his country in public life to the end as a Jurat, Poindexter would henceforth have leisure sufficient for the scholarly work for which he had laid the foundations in early life.

¹⁰ Plaidis de Câtel, Jersey Court, June 15, 1676.

LEGAL AND HISTORICAL WORKS

From 1635, when Poindexter became fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, until his death in 1691, he never really withdrew from public life, at least from public service, even in times of his official exile. We have observed in the last chapter, however, that after resigning from his post as Lieutenant Bailiff in 1676, he devoted the major portion of his life thereafter to research, compilation, and writing. Perhaps among his remarkable accomplishments is a project which he began during his second stay at Oxford, after the Restoration. It was then that he began to gather and copy all available documents touching on the history, laws, and customs of Jersey. He conducted such a thorough search among the records in London, Oxford, and elsewhere in public and private collections in England that little else of worth on the subject has come to light since that time. There is no indication that he ever visited Italy, or, in fact, any European country except France and the British Isles. His probable sojourn in Virginia has already been alluded to. In the Seventeenth Century relations between Jersey and the adjacent Norman mainland were far more frequent and intimate than in later times, and it is obvious that Poindexter made many visits to the old cities and towns of Normandy, where he steeped himself in the ancient laws that once had governed Jersey and that still formed the basis for her legal code. Since he was equally fluent in standard French of the Seventeenth Century and English, as well as the Norman patois of his native island, not to mention Latin and Greek, he enjoyed an advantage shared by few others engaged in research in his day. After his return to Jersey in 1668 he completed his transcriptions of Norman legal documents by copying all the major charters extant on the island.

The first, and perhaps the greatest work that Poindexter completed after his return to Jersey was *Caesarea, or A Discourse of the Island of Jersey*. We would not know the exact date at which he finished the manuscript, had he not told us in the work itself, "The last year 1681 was ye greatest Cydar year

that ever was seene."¹ From this bit of internal evidence we can judge that he wrote this part of the book in 1682, when he was seventy-three years old. Strange as it may seem, no history or treatise specifically concerned with Jersey had ever been written before this time.² Therefore, Poindexter has the unchallenged distinction of having been the pioneer in the field of Jersey historiography.

The original Manuscript of *Caesarea* is still extant in Poindexter's own hand. It was presented by him personally to King James II and given by the latter to Robert Harley, later Earl of Oxford, a noted antiquarian and collector of the day. We find the following statement written in Harley's hand on the first leaf of the manuscript: "This did belong to King James. I had it from Col. Grahme." It can now be seen in the so-called Harleian Collection at the British Museum.

Caesarea does not purport to be a chronological history of Jersey. It is exactly what the title indicates, a discourse or treatise touching on many aspects of the island: its topography, monuments, climate, laws, privileges, people, government, and history. The second part is devoted to the Channel Islands in general and contains anecdotes concerning their history.

Another salient fact is that Poindexter chose to write it in English, whereas all his other major works were written in French. He clearly intended it for the eyes, not so much of his fellow Jerseymen, few of whom spoke English at this time, but rather of the British, whose *greater knowledge and love of the island* he was seeking. Perhaps the greatest tribute to the book comes from the pen of Philippe Falle, who succeeded Thomas Poingdestre as rector of St. Saviour in 1689. Falle published in

¹ Jean Poingdestre, *Caesarea, or A Discourse of the Island of Jersey*, Société Jeriaise (St. Helier, 1889), p. 23.

² Earlier English historians and chroniclers, e.g. Holinshed and Camden, gave brief descriptions of the Channel Islands in their works, and Heylin, who spent a week in Jersey in 1628, later incorporated his observations largely on religious matters, in a work entitled *A Full Relation of Two Journeys the One into the Main-land of France, The other into Some of the Adjacent Islands* (London, 1656). None of these writers, however, treated of Jersey in a specific or detailed fashion, and no one before Poingdestre had devoted an entire book to the subject.

1694 in London his *Account of Jersey*. In his preface he gives ample credit to Poindexter and in fact acknowledges that, without *Caesarea*, his Account would never have come to pass.

... a very learned and worthy Magistrate of JERSEY. John Poingdestre, Esq.: did some years ago undertake to account for this island in particular, of which he was a native; and how well accomplished he was, not for such a work only, but for any much greater, let this short Character of him declare.

All this, and much more, I am enabled to say from the intimate Knowledge I had of him; who was my Parishioner at St. Saviour's, my near Neighbor, and singular good Friend; and whom having according to my duty assisted in his last most Christian Moments, I committed to his peaceful Grave, aged Fourscore and Three. Now as to that for which he is remembered here, viz. his writing about this island, surely none was so able to do it as he; none having so thorough an insight into the whole frame of our Constitution and Polity. His long exercising the Magistrature had made our Laws and Judicial Proceedings, our Customs and Usages, familiar to him. He had transcribed all our Characters, and reduced our Privileges into a sort of System, branching them out under proper Heads. And as to Historical Antiquities and Researches, he had from his earliest days been collecting all he could find of that kind of Print or upon records relating to us. Out of this Store he compiled his Book, which after all never appeared otherwise than in loose Sheets, communicated to a few friends, and too plainly wanting his finishing hand. I was favor'd with a Transcript of it in his Life-time, and after his decease, his Son, understanding that I was about taking up and prosecuting the same Subject, added a farther Supplement of Papers, with full power to publish them and all that was his Father's as my own. But I am not so vain, to arrogate to myself the praise due to another Man's Labours. Therefore I do frankly acknowledge, that in the present Undertaking I do but write after that excellent Man's Copy. And though I allow myself the Liberty of altering his Method, supplying his omissions, leaving out or but slightly glancing at some things which he dwelt upon more copiously, nay, differing from him in some particulars, in short, making such Changes in the whole as that to one who considers both we may seem to have pursued different Designs, yet still I must own that the Foundation on which I build is his, and a great part of the Materials employed in this Work likewise so much his, as to be sometimes laid down and delivered in his own Words.³

³ Phillip Falle, *Caesarea*, preface, xii-xiv.

Poindexter prefaces his *Caesarea* with two lines from the *Odyssey*, not, as often in that period, as a matter of form with little relevance to the subsequent text, but rather with a striking and poignant pertinence. By means of the original in the Harleian Manuscript we are likewise afforded a rare sample of his famous Greek hand.⁴

What is notable throughout Poindexter's *Caesarea* is that it abounds in citations of primary and secondary sources. And it is the range of these sources that is arresting—one of the tangible indications of the breadth of his knowledge. He was clearly well-versed in the writers and chroniclers of the Middle Ages as in the classical authors. A good example of his exhaustive reading and preparation for a subject at hand lies in his discussion of the origin of the name Jersey; which he approaches in a linguistic as well as historical manner:

Noe man can expect there would be any great knowledge of these islands before their subiection to ye Crowne of England, seeing there is soe little preserved of what is happened there since that time: for besides those fewe helps which the Records in the Tower & at Westminster doe afford us, wee can hardly relye Vpon any euidence on dubitable Authority. This darknesse in our affaires, which vseth to detarre others, hath wrought ye contrary effect in mee, by instigating mee to a more exact search in ye Treasury of Antiquity; but espally in Manuscripts & in ye liues of Saints, which amongst many fabulous things containe many truths. What hath ben ye successe shall appeare anon. The first thing that I haue endeauoured to knowe, are the old names which these Islands were knowne by. For what would it auaile to read the feates of Jul. Caesar in Gallia vnlesse I knewe aforehand what part of the world is Gallia; & y^t by y^t name is vnderstood a Countrey nowe knowne by the name of France. Cambden, I suppose, is the first who hath comitted to writing that Jersey is that island in y^e British Ocean, which in Antoninus his Itinerary is called *Caesarea*, & y^t Jersey or Gersey (for it is found written both wayes) is but a Contraction or corruption of y^t name, as Cherbourg or Gerbourg of *Caesaris burgum*: a very good example, if "*Burgum*" or "*Burgus*" were a Latin word neere *Caesars*

⁴ Homer, *Odyssey*, IX, 27, 28. A. T. Murray's translation in Homer, *Odyssey* (London, 1953), p. 305, reads: "... a rugged isle, but a good nurse of young men; and for myself no other thing can I see sweeter than one's own land."

time. Neuerthesse his coniecture hath ben followed by all others Neither is it my purpose to oppose it. But I am much at a stand how, if that be true, it came to passe that not long after Antoninus it should be called by another name soe different from it that it can neuer haue be deriued from it, nor contracted or corrupted into it by any means. What that name was wee may learne from a Donation made of foure of these Islands to Sampson, made newly Bishop of Dol in Britany: wherein this pretended Caesarea is called Augia & in French Augié. This Donation is found in the life of that Bishop, which I haue seene in written hand very ancient, & in Latin; & is attested by Bertrand d'argentré in his History. If it be asked why this Augia should be Jersey, rather than some other Island; I will quickly take away that scruple by the testimony of a certaine Fragment taken out of the Abbey of Fontenelles by DuChesne in y^e 3rd Tome of his "Scriptores Coetanei Historiae Francorum," which is neere as ancient as Charlesmaigne, concerning geroaldus one of the Abbots there, is enim (saith he) quadam legatione fungebatur iussu Caroli Augusti, in Insulam cui nomen est Augia, & est Adiacens pago Constantino. If he had pointed at Jersey with the finger he could not haue shewed it more plainly For Gregorius Turon.. Aymonius & Papirius Masson, speaking of Jersey, without naming it, call it the first insulam maris quod adiacet Ciuitati Constantinae. the second Insulam maris quae adiacet Constantiae, & the third Insulam Constantinii littoris.⁵

This passage, though not serving to terminate the learned argument involved, does suffice to illustrate not only Poindexter's erudition, but also his lively style and his remarkable critical ability at a time when most writers in the historical field were still content to accept blindly the dicta of their forefathers without any serious questioning and comparison. And so it is throughout the book. Even a casual reader's interest never flags or falls afoul of any cant or irrelevancies. As might be expected he dwells long on the legal aspect of the island's history, but he likewise reveals a surprising fund of knowledge of such matters as "the nature of y^e Soile," "Vraic,⁶ the seasons of gathering it, & y^e seuerall uses of it," "orchards and Cydar presses," and so forth.

Poindexter's eye for external beauty, often absent in a scholar,

⁵ Poindexter, *Caesarea*, 79-80.

⁶ Vraic is a type of seaweed much used in the Channel Islands.

is shown in such passages as the following:

The Houses in Jersey are not soe slightly built, as they are generally throughout England, being built of stone very substantially; some are couered with slate, but for ye most part they are tacht soe artificially that they are neuer a whit the lesse beautifull for it. But the furniture within is not ordinarily answerable to the outside: ye ingenious & delight of this peeople consisting more in lasting ornaments. than in such as may be lost or soone perish. and the reason of this I conceive to be: for that in England they are for euer . . .⁷ Next either for hies or yeares; but in Jersey they are for euer . . .⁷ Next are the Churches in number twelve, the like whereof are not to be found in the same plat of ground in all Europe, Cityes excepted.⁸

These quotations would be perhaps over-lengthy in comparison with those from his other books, were it not that they evince, as no other passages from him do, this man's sparkling versatility as well as the depth of learning which all his books reveal.

In addition to his *Caesarea* Poindexter produced two other works of a different nature during this period of his life. They were both valuable legal treatises which still form the basis for all later studies on Jersey law and jurisprudence. Since they are of a technical nature, however, and not as pertinent to the present study as some of his other contributions, less time will be devoted to their consideration. The first of these works was entitled *Les Commentaires sur l'Ancienne Coutume de Normandie*. His well-accomplished aim in this work was to compare the original Norman laws and statutes with those in Jersey, which were derived from them, but which had suffered some alteration and experienced some development due to the change in governmental and religious allegiance. This book existed only in manuscript form until several MSS. in private hands were collated and published by the Société de Gens de Droit in 1907.⁹ The second legal work was *Les Lois et Coutumes*

⁷ Poindexter, *Caesarea*, p. 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹ Jean Poingdestre, *Les Commentaires sur l'Ancienne Coutume de Normandie* (Jersey, 1907).

de l'Ile de Jersey, published by the same society in 1927.¹⁰

The very fact that these works were finally published, not as historical curiosities, but as source books potentially useful to the legal group that saw to their printing, is ample testimony to their worth and to the esteem with which they are still regarded.

A third legal work probably dates from this period as well. This treatise, entitled "Remarques et Animadversions sur la nouvelle Coutume de Normandie" remains unpublished.

As a final tribute to these legal works of Poindexter, we might quote here the closing words of Edouard Toulmin Nicolle, an advocate of the Royal Court of Jersey, who edited *Commentaires sur l'ancienne Coutume de Normandie* and attached thereto a brief biography of the author:

Doué de talents qui suffraient à orner la carrière de n'importe quel homme, Poingdestre, par son amour del l'étude des classiques, et des Lois Civiles et Romaines, pour ne pas parler de ses connaissances approfondies des Lois Normandes et Jersiais, acquies une place au premier range de Jersiais distingués. La lecture de ses ouvrages ne fera que confirmer leur importance et fera ressortir les traces de l'esprit cultivé de leur auteur et l'intelligence éclairée avec laquelle il examine des questions de droit. A cet égard les Commentaires de Poingdestre sur les Lois et Coutumes de Jersey revalisent avec ceux de son grand contemporain le Geyt. Celui-ci souvent traite son sujet d'une manier partielle; souvent il s'embrouille ou laisse la question non-résolue; celui-là jamais. Le style de Poingdestre est clair et concis; il parle d'une maniere convaincante et avec autorité. Les écrits de le Geyt abondent en faits curieux et historiques et en anecdotes agréables. Les ouvrages de Poingdestre sont rigoureusement juridiques. Nul Jersiais n'avait une connaissance plus intime de la Coutume de Normandie et ne savait mieux que lui jusqu' où elle était applicable à l'Ile-Voilà pourquoi ces Commentaires sont si précieux entre les mains des Avocats et des Ecrivains de la Cour Royale de notre petit pays.¹¹

Nicolle's tribute to Poindexter is in most respects applicable to

¹⁰ Jean Poingdestre, *Les Lois et Coutumes de l'Ile de Jersey*, (Jersey, 1927)

¹¹ E. T. Nicolle, "Notice Biographique," in Jean Poingdestre *Les Commentaires* (Jersey, 1907), xii.

all his works (with the possible exception, of course, that we do find historical anecdotes and "local color" in his non-judicial works). But the passage of time has enhanced, not dimmed his reputation. His traits of candor, clarity, conciseness, and authority have insured him a lasting place in men's estimation.

CHAPTER VII
CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP

It is difficult to set aside, as the purposes of this thesis dictate, a separate compartment, as it were, wherein Poindexter's classical scholarship and contributions may be treated solely and apart from his other works. This division can be accomplished technically by listing his specific classical contributions under a different head, as will be attempted. Actually, however, his classical contributions cannot be divorced from his other works (or indeed his daily actions), for he was, as has been observed, a humanist and (at least in his desires and aims, if not in the fullest learned definition) a *uomo universale*, and all his works and indeed his entire life are permeated with his knowledge of and love for ancient Greece and Rome.

This fact of his being a humanist *in esse* cannot be stressed too much, for it is the basic thesis of this study that the largely unsung men who embodied the classic ideal in their lives had a larger part in the moulding of Western thought and cultural patterns than is generally supposed. Our modern tendency to evaluate cultural contributions solely in terms of specific works left to us by humanists *in operatio* and to dismiss as ephemeral the less demonstrable but equally valuable testimony of one's life and example has caused us perhaps to overlook those who may have made a deeper impact in inculcating simple classical values in the minds of their lay contemporaries than their more learned, but also more inaccessible brethren, the major scholars.

In the foregoing chapter we have seen that Poindexter's editors and critics in the legal and historical fields have all paid tribute to his classical knowledge. Few who mention him fail to make such an acknowledgement. Therefore, much that bears upon his classical contributions has already been said.

Although the influence of partisan politics over public appointments may be suggested in order to discredit the offer of such an office as proof of one's abilities in that field, it is difficult to imagine how Poindexter's nomination for Latin Secretary in the government in exile of Charles II at a time when classical attainments were an important part of the public image could have failed to arouse animosity of many other aspirants to

the position, had he been devoid of ability in that area or of no more than average talents. With as formidable a Puritan counterpart as Milton in the opposition, it is not reasonable to suppose that the Royalists would have regarded their secretaryship as a sinecure to be awarded to a mediocre but loyal adherent. Thus I cite this offer as testimony of his stature as a classicist.

When one comes to the discussion of his specific contributions in the classical field, the task admittedly becomes more complicated. As can be seen from the study of his historical and juridical works, everything that John Poindexter wrote existed solely in manuscript until the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Consequently it is almost miraculous that so much of his written work has come down to us intact. Ironically, it is his classical works which have not fared too well. But, when we reflect that he devoted most of his adult life to public service in a time of considerable crisis, it is not strange that the bulk of his written work should have lain in the same field—it was thus that he put his humanism to work.

One complete manuscript, already mentioned before, written by Poindexter in Latin with numerous Greek passages, has survived and is in the possession of the author, as are some other contemporary papers which once belonged to him but were not written by him. The latter collection of manuscripts does not have direct bearing upon him, but it does offer a reflection of the life around him. One is a feudal rent book written in a late Seventeenth Century legal hand, and bound in vellum. On the back is written in a faded, contemporary hand, "livre de Droits Apartenant a Thomas Poingdestre 1690." In it are recorded various types of feudal *rentes* of grain, poultry, etc. owed to the Poingdestre family. All entries are made in French. The Thomas mentioned on the cover is obviously John Poindexter's half brother, seigneur of the fief.

The other group of manuscripts is a miscellaneous collection of varying age and subject matter. The earliest dates from the late Sixteenth Century, and the latest was written about 1690. Many are concerned, strangely enough, with Daniel Norman, a staunch Parliamentarian who was installed as Vicomte of

Jersey during the Commonwealth period. Poindexter conducted his legal affairs in Jersey after Norman was forced to retire to England after the Restoration. There exist, side by side with these legal matters, rare, and perhaps unique, copies of contemporary Parliamentary speeches, as well as random jottings, including a satirical piece concerning leading figures of Restoration England written in the form of an inventory.

The aforementioned manuscript of Poindexter's composition was written in his own hand, probably after his return to Jersey after the Restoration. Whereas it cannot be classified purely as a work of classical scholarship, it does abound in references to and quotations from Galen and other ancient authorities in medicine and allied fields. It is presented in the form of lectures, probably based on the subject matter of those either attended or given by Poindexter during his tenure at Oxford. There are six lectures in all, and most of them deal with the digestive system, particularly the stomach and intestines. After brief physiological descriptions the major portion is devoted to the discussion of various ailments and diseases afflicting these parts of the body. Although some contemporary views are cited, by far the bulk of the discussion is based on the authority of the ancients, illustrating both the current dependence on these sources and Poindexter's respect for classical authority. In addition to the remedies for these illnesses suggested in the actual text, there is an appendix containing a number of prescriptions considered suitable for the diseases discussed therein.

The penmanship of the manuscript closely resembles the small, refined hand found in the original manuscript of *Caesarea* in the British Museum already alluded to, and is typical of the late Seventeenth Century. The manuscript has remained in the Poindexter family ever since its composition and was given to the writer by Mary Ellaline Poingdestre, now Roydhouse, of Teddington, Middlesex, England.

The style reveals a curious mingling of correct Latin grammatical forms and sentence structure with minor elements of medieval vocabulary and terminology as would be expected in a medical treatise of that period. Vestiges of Scholastician remain in the style and in the orderly, somewhat matter-of-fact treatment of the subject matter.

Below is a passage taken from the beginning of the book to illustrate the mode of treatment as well as the style and subject matter:

Lectio Prima

Corpus humanum quatenus morbis obnoxium, quum sit subiectum Medicinae (Academici Clarissimi, spectatissimique Auditores), cuius non minus studendam quam praestantissimam fabricationem summus ille rerum opifex consilis aeternis irrevocabiliue sententia ordinavit, corpore constare et anima, Tanquam ex Caelis et Terra conjunctum unitis: rectissime Microcosmi ac universi epitomes Mundi nomen sortitur: quumque gloria sit admiranda, praecipuumque rerum creatarum decus, quicquid enim splendidius elucet. Speciei iam propagationem, Mons suprema generationis ope, lege perpetua fieri sancivit; Individui vero conservationem nutritione constituit: huius actionis quam diversae sint partes, quae idea diversa officii obundis sentiuntur organa. os cibum, prius masticatione confectum, ventriculo conquendum committit: ventriculus, Corporis culina, cibum recipit, ac Chylificationem perficit. Chyli in intestina superiora dimissi succum puriorem magisque nutritioni aptum, Hepar, venarum sugentium ope ad se allicit, secretis hic, crassioribus huius coctionis facibus, quae ad intestina inferiora relegantur, ad ibi ad expulsionis usque tempus a Natura servantur.¹

In the realm of specific classical scholarship, perhaps the most tantalizing, but at the same time the most frustrating aspect of Poindexter's career is the possibility that he produced an edition of the lexicographer Hesychius. Philip Falle, in his *Account of Jersey*, says of Poindexter:

... He was esteemed one of the best Grecians in the University, able to restore and give a new edition of Hesychius, the Lexicographer, which was long expected from him. The beautifullest Greek types of the Stephens scarce excelled his handwriting in that language.²

Besides making reference to Poindexter's edition of Hesychius, several writers attribute to him other efforts in the classical field. For instance, Payne vaguely alludes to his having edited other texts:

¹ John Poindexter, *Treatise on Medicine*, manuscript in the possession of the writer.

² Philippe Falle, *Account of Jersey* (London, 1694), xii.

... He appears to have possessed every quality calculated to adorn public and private life, and these he exercised in the sphere of his eventful career. He was esteemed one of the soundest Grecians of his day, in the penmanship of which language he was an elegant adept. He prepared, for private use, emendations of the text of several Greek poets, which still exist in MS.³

Hazy though this reference is, it is heartening that in Payne's time (1860) the manuscripts of several of Poindexter's classical editions apparently were still in existence. Payne was an intimate of several members of the family, who were at the peak of their prominence during the Victorian period. It is likely that he was familiar with the library of John Poingdestre of Grainville Manor and of his son, Edward Gibbs Poingdestre. The latter sold the manor house in 1873 together with most of its contents after severe financial reverses. Much of the library was likewise dispersed. It is unlikely that the family intentionally disposed of any of their private papers, most of which they carefully retained, but there is a chance that this was the period at which the manuscripts in question were lost sight of. Records of the auction of furniture and other family effects held at Grainville still exist.⁴ Only one manuscript was offered for sale therein, and it was entitled simply "Commentary, (very rare)."

Later historians, e.g., G. R. Balleine,⁵ have seen fit to give credence without question to the prior existence of both the edition of Hesychius and the manuscripts of the "Several Greek poets."

Kurt Latte, in his edition of Hesychius, which he prefaced with a lengthy study of manuscripts and prior editions, makes no mention, however, of an English edition in the Seventeenth Century.⁶ In fact, he cites only one edition between 1521 and

³ James B. P. Payne, *An Armorial of Jersey* (London, 1859-1865), p. 322.

⁴ Bernard Hastings, *Catalogue of the Valuable Contents of Grainville House* (Jersey, 1873), p. 47.

⁵ G. R. Balleine, *A Biographical Dictionary of Jersey* (London, 1957), 553.

⁶ Kurt Latte, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon* (Haumai, 1953), XXXIV.

1746, and that was published at Leyden in 1668 by Schrevelius. It is interesting to note in this connection, however, that Schrevelius was said merely to have added brief annotations to a text based on the work of such earlier scholars as Henri Estienne and Claude de Saumaise. There is a possibility that, though Poindexter's manuscript never went to press, it was known to some of these scholars, although this, of course, must always remain a surmise. A search of the British Museum, various libraries at Oxford, such as the Bodleian, and in the archives of the Société Jersiaise has so far failed to bring the manuscript to light.

Perhaps, considering the felicitous survival of Poindexter's other long-unpublished manuscripts, as well as the recent discovery by the writer of the medical treatise and miscellaneous papers previously discussed in this chapter, another European search in the future will meet with success. In the meantime, however, and perhaps even forever, we must be content with the probability that Poindexter made some kind of annotations on one or more classical texts and on the possibility that one, and maybe more of these was published. It must be admitted that the passages quoted from Poindexter's historians contain some ambiguity in this regard, though at the very least they are a testimony to a widespread contemporary and subsequent esteem for his critical ability in the classics.

No further events of a public nature have been recorded concerning Poindexter's life. In 1689 the historian Philippe Falle, who has left us so much valuable information about Poindexter's life, succeeded Thomas Poingdestre as rector of the Parish of St. Saviour. It was in those last years of our subject's life that his learned rector was compiling his own *Account of Jersey*, based largely, as he himself acknowledged, on his parishioner's earlier *Caesarea*. It was likewise during those years that Falle came to be intimately acquainted with Poindexter and his works. Falle himself was by no means merely an insular rector with no claim to historical accuracy and reliability. He held an M.A. from Oxford and distinguished himself in many ways on the British scene—as an advisor and later Chaplain to William III. His library formed, on his recommenda-

tion, the nucleus of the present public library of Jersey at St. Helier.⁷

When John Poindexter died quietly at the age of 83 at Grainville Manor, it was this same loving friend who interred his body within the Thirteenth Century church of St. Saviour on September 4, 1691. As a final touch Falle penned his epitaph which, cut in marble and set within a simple baroque marble frame on the sanctuary wall, can still be seen today. Written in terse, elegant Latin, it furnishes a worthy tribute to Poindexter's memory:

In omni scientiarum genere eruditissimus utriusque juris peritissimus, graecanicis literis ita doctus, ut priscis illis Athenis oriundum natura diceret—Regis Partibus semper adiectissimus.

In closing this study and in evaluating Poindexter as a humanist and classicist, it might be good once again to consider Falle's words about the relativity of his parishioner's fame as established by a long retirement in Jersey to the possibility of far greater repute had he remained in England, "It was indeed a disadvantage to him, to act in so narrow a Theater as a little Island, where he had not scope to exert his talents . . ."⁸ This factor of insularity in his environment cannot be stressed too much, for Jersey was very remote in the Seventeenth Century; in fact, it was little known until recently. It cannot be compared in this respect with an English shire, nor can Poindexter be compared with a social counterpart of his era in England. Falle's ostensible aim in compiling his *Account* was to combat the ignorance of Jersey which he encountered in England. The island had no printing press at all until 1784 when Mathieu Alexandre established one there. It even took fifty years for the Church of England to become fully established there although it had had complete loyal support from the time of Elizabeth. The fact that few English and almost no Continental contemporaries mention him is not a valid criterion of his worth. His years outside Jersey were few and were

⁷ Balleine, *Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 273-279.

⁸ Falle, *Account of Jersey*, xiii.

spent in a narrow circle at Oxford or in the hubbub of the Civil War. Even in the article on Poindexter in the *Dictionary of National Biography* only Jersey sources are cited.⁹ Thus we must work with what we have and lend the credence to these authorities that their testimony merits. With this in mind, the writer has striven to use the most reliable sources at hand; consequently primary and contemporary ones are few. Yet, the unanimity of testimony should possess considerable weight, for in no basic fact of Poindexter's life or even in the interpretation of any of those facts is there conflict or contradiction. Yet, when the final criterion of this thesis is applied to Poindexter's life, he is not found lacking: he was a *vir liberalis* whose classical scholarship was integrated with his life. His cultivation and use of letters were geared for life as a whole and directed towards the community as a whole, not just to the world of scholars. Thus, if at some future time it be definitely established that he never did prepare his edition of Hesychius for publication, his acknowledged ability to do so and his obvious formal attainments in Latin and Greek did serve as examples and incentives to his compeers. That he was a major scholar no one claims; that he was a scholarly humanist no one can deny.

⁹ Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.) *Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 1921-1922), Vol. 16, pp. 16-17.